THE MESSAGE HAS NOT CHANGED: FOSTERING HOPE THROUGH THE MESSAGES OF THE SPIRITUALS WHEN ADMINISTERING PASTORAL CARE

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ABSTRACT

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by

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This project will examine hope fostered through the messages of the Negro Spirituals. The context in which the project will be implemented is Campbell African Methodist Episcopal Church, located in the Frankford Section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The issue addressed in this project will examine the rebuilding of hope through the messages of the spirituals. The project methodology consisted of concerts, workshops, and interviews to show the value of the spirituals, in conjunction with rebuilding hope in the lives of people. The project showed that using the spirituals in pastoral care could foster hope to those living in this post-modern generation.

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I would like to acknowledge my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is the center of my joy. I would like to thank President Deichmann for the great work she does in leading this great institution. I would like to thank Dr. William H. Curtis and Dr. Gina M. Steward for pouring into me from day one until the completion of this project. I would like to thank them for the words of wisdom spoken, the knowledge imparted, and for the sermons preached which has affected and will affect me for the rest of my life. I pray that I am able to pour into others as they have poured into me. I pray I can represent the Curtis-Steward Fellows to the best of my ability. I would like to thank Dr. Donnell Moore for all of those late lobby discussions since the first intensive in 2012. My life has changed since our first interaction. I would like to thank the members of Bethel AME Church in Beverly New Jersey, and the members of Campbell AME Church in Philadelphia, for without your love and support, I would not have been able to complete this journey. I would also like to thank my family and friends who continued to push me and prayed for me along this journey of transformation.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my children Michael D. Chism II, Cierra C. Chism, and Samiya D. Chism. You three never lost faith in me and in your own way, kept my spirits lifted.

INTRODUCTION

In his book *Negro spiritual*, Dr. Earl R. Jefferson posits:

> How easy is it to take for granted: to be oblivious to the fact of the trials, the errors, the hardships and the struggles which have brought us to where we are today. It is especially easy for some of us in the African American Community; our actions seem to intimate that we think things just happened.… Our fore parents…struggled and fought and, in many instances died in order to pave a way for us, yet many of us today only have a scant, if any, appreciation at all for the context out of which we evolved.[1]

The Negro spiritual was a vehicle that was used to bring the African American community to where it is today, telling of uprooted peoples' pain, sorrow, suffering but also providing hope to the singers and their listeners. Historically, they were sung in the fields among slaves and sharecroppers, in peoples' homes, and in churches. But in today's society, spirituals are seldom sung or even heard in churches due to the rise of hymns and mainstream gospel music. In African Methodism, however, Negro spirituals *are* still relevant. Although no spirituals were included in the first hymnal comprised by Richard Allen in 1801, spirituals did show up in the AME hymnbook in 1878 and continue to be sung today.

This project will examine how the messages of the spirituals can foster hope in pastoral care. It is the clergy person's responsibility to offer hope to this postmodern generation. As members of the construct of Christianity, we can offer hope because we have the message of hope. There are many genres of music that flood our airwaves daily.

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[1]Earl R. Jefferson, *Negro Spirituals* (Chester: Lovey's Printing, 2007), 1.

The messages of the spirituals are as important today as they were in times past. The messages of the songs brought hope to a people who had to accept the present reality. The messages of the spirituals can give hope to those in this postmodern generation who have had to accept their present reality. The researcher plans to lift the virtue of hope out of the messages of the spirituals.

This project is divided into six chapters. The first chapter tells spiritual journey of the researcher, the spiritual journey of the context, and how the merging of these two journey will bleed out several theological pillars. The second chapter views various disciplines that may speak to the focus of this project. Chapter two also includes several "conversations" between authors in reference to the focus of this project. The third chapter provides a history of the AME Church and the itinerancy system, history of the Negro Spirituals, scriptural references that speak through the vehicle of pastoral care, and the theological pillars that were discovered in chapter one. Chapter four focuses on the methods the researcher used in order to analyze the context in reference to the project focus. Chapter five provides the analyzed data of the method designs used in the chapter four. Chapter six provides reflection, summarization, and concludes the work included in this work.

Romans 15:4 states," For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope." The slaves found encouragement in the scriptures and were literal in their interpretation of them. For persons living in the 21st Century, the scriptures can provide hope and messages of the Negro Spirituals can aid in the discovery of hope.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Michael was engaged in a conversation with a pastor in the AME church during the summer of 2012. He told the pastor about his recent encounters since being appointed as pastor of Bethel AME church in Beverly, New Jersey. The pastor listened intently as Michael spoke. First, the pastor agreed with Michael and answered, "Welcome to the pastorate." The pastor's next statements, however, really hit home: "You are beginning to get firsthand experience of the word you are preaching to your congregation. You are now able to apply the principles you teach and preach about. You are living what you are preaching." When these statements were spoken and Michael entered United Theological Seminary, things began to make sense. Michael had been prepared throughout his life for everything he was encountering in the present.

I recognized that God had been active in my life, even during the times before accepting Christ as Savior. I had been protected, strengthened, and given hope. My faith had been tested before learning about faith. Soon I began to look at my childhood. I could not recall many memories of my life between the ages of three to eight, but there were a few things that did seem to stand out. I have three siblings, one brother from my mother, and two brothers from my father. On my father's side, one brother is older and the other is younger. The brother on my mother's side is younger than the oldest brother on my father's side by four days. Life with the brother on his mother's side was not bad, just

different. My brother is older than me by two years. The dynamics of family played a part in my development.

Sibling rivalry was alive and well. The rivalry has become something to reflect upon in my present life. My brother was treated one way and I was treated another way. Life was unfair and I quickly learned that life was not going to go the way I wanted it to go. Life was going to be life. I learned how to deal with people and realized that I could not change their actions; I could only change how I handled people in different situations. My mother taught me to learn people as much as I could, so I would not be alarmed by their actions. This lesson came in another form when my mother's boyfriend began to physically abuse me. My behavior was not the greatest during elementary school. When my behavior was unfavorable, the boyfriend would abuse me and not tell his mother that he did it. When I tried to tell my mother numerous times about the abuse, she did not believe me.

I began to lose hope. Family members would not step in because they said it was my mother's house and they could not do much. My father said he wanted to help, but because he was not the man of the house, his hands were tied. I began to alienate myself from the world. I needed something that would allow me to cope with the frustration of life. I needed something or someone that would alleviate the pain, even for just a little while. God intervened during this time in my life and gave him something to take my mind off life. It was during these times that I found solace in reading books and listening to music. The books transported him to a place other than his home, and the music took my mind off of the problems I had to endure. I always listened to music since I was in school and learning about the various types of music. I gravitated to the music and

messages of the spirituals. God allowed the messages of the spirituals to show me that there had been others who had endured the trials and tribulations of life. God allowed me to see that, no matter how hard the situation was in life, it was only temporary and one-day things would change. The stories of the slaves told in the music seemed to tell my story. Music seemed to speak to my life situations and give me something that I did not have—hope.

Music provided a means of escape from the realities of life. From elementary through high school, I was involved in some facet of music. From the third grade to the ninth grade, I played the trumpet and learned to read music. Playing the trumpet was therapeutic. It gave me something to do at home. I could practice as loud as I wanted and blow off steam. Playing the trumpet also gave a certain level of peace. I could get engulfed in the music and not have to worry about home life, at least for a few moments. One song I listened to was "Ain't No Need to Worry," by The Winans, featuring Anita Baker. I felt a little better when I listened to this song because I began to realize that trouble does not last forever. I began to understand that God had protected me because the abuse had not killed me. God had allowed me to survive the brutality of humanity. God allowed the music that I listened to, learned about, and played to be a cushion to reality and the cruelty of people.

Music was also the "place" where I met God. My family was always involved in some aspect of church, from cleaning the sanctuary to going to church meetings. I grew from singing in the choir to directing and playing for the choir every now and then. I accepted Christ as Lord and Savior after hearing a message from one of the associate ministers. The minister said, "If you don't want to go through problems by yourself, then

you need to accept Christ." I endured abuse from my mother's boyfriend and made the decision that I did not want to be by myself anymore. The decision to accept Christ gave a sense of relief. A few years after accepting Christ, the abuse stopped. God had stepped in and intervened. He had clearly said that it was time for the abuse to stop, and He allowed the eyes of my mother to be opened so that she could see the abuse for herself. This act was symbolic of Jesus opening the eyes of the blind. A miracle had been performed in my eyes and I was able to see firsthand that God could change situations.

Now I had music and Christ as Lord of my life to protect me. It was during a song that I heard the voice of the Lord and answered the call to preach. I was seventeen and was singing, "Stand Until," a song written by Kirk Franklin and recorded by Bishop Paul S. Morton. The song was placed in the second half of the church anniversary. In the midst of singing the song, I heard a voice telling me to, "Go preach the Word." I continued to sing, and at the end of the song, the glory of the Lord fell in the sanctuary and the Holy Spirit engulfed me. I answered the call to preach that night, was approached by a minister, and was then instructed to speak with the pastor immediately. I spoke with my pastor who instructed him to pray and seek God for thirty days. After the thirty days passed, I was approached by my pastor and was instructed to choose a date for my trial sermon. I was nervous, but he immediately began to pray. A date was set and my pastor began to plan the service.

I was then asked to travel to Shippensburg, Pennsylvania with another preacher, and he consented. Soon after we arrived, I was asked to preach. One of my friends had been scheduled to preach but got sick. I was already trying to prepare for my trial sermon

and now had to prepare another sermon. I was given many books and told to let the Spirit lead me. I preached that evening and returned to Philadelphia the next day.

On their way back to Philadelphia, we were involved in a car crash. Thankfully, there were no fatalities! Once again, God had stepped in the middle of trouble and spared my life. When I was in the hospital, immediately following the accident, I knew that God had spared me. I knew that it was God who kept companions and me throughout the whole ordeal. While recuperating at home for a few weeks following the crash, I used the time to prepare for the trial sermon.

The day arrived and the trial sermon was set to take place. Even though I had a speech impediment, I knew that I was called to deliver the Word of God. The people arrived at the church and the service started. I delivered the sermon and was greeted by many people at the end of the service. A load seemed to be lifted off of my shoulders and the journey toward licensure in the African Methodist Episcopal Church had begun. Michael was nineteen years old at the time.

I had been abused and lived through a period in life when I thought I was alone. I did not trust anyone, and did not believe that I could count on anyone. I thought the closest people to me did not love me because they did not come to my rescue. I learned about the nature of people, and had to accept a reality, at an early age that everything in this life is temporary. I also learned that I did not have to feel alone anymore after accepting Christ. I learned that there are good people in the world. I learned that good things could happen in life. I learned that there was more to going to church than hanging altar skirts and polishing communion table furniture. I learned the power of music and the role it played in my life. I learned that music held me together before I met Christ. I

learned that music allowed me to open up to speak to people outside of my home. I also learned that music was a vehicle for something greater in life and that I was worth more than I thought. I had just been used to deliver the word of God and began the process toward ordination in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. I had not expected life to take this kind of turn.

A meeting was set to take place approximately three months after the trial sermon. This meeting was held to determine if I was to be licensed as a preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. A vote was taken and it was unanimously decided that I would get licensed and moved to the next stage of the process. The next group of individuals questioned me and, once again, it was unanimously decided that I would be licensed and moved to the next stage of the process. A subsequent meeting was held and the individuals in line to be ordained to the preaching ministry had to take classes ranging from Christian Ethics to Old Testament History. I successfully completed the classes and went before the group that would decide if I would stay on the road to ordination. I was questioned and the board recommended that I move forward in the process toward ordination. It was during this time that I became engaged and got married.

I was married September 1, 2001. Prior to the wedding, my fiancé attended my church. Some of the members were not welcoming towards my fiancé, which caused me to look at the state of my family and future. After talking and praying, he and his now-wife decided that the African Methodist Episcopal Church was not the place they were supposed to stay at that time in their lives. A comparable independent Baptist church was located and my wife joined the church first. I was not as readily eager to join, but soon became worried about my wife's faith. I decided to join the church with my wife and my

ministry continued. The community choir I directed had visited the Baptist church prior to me joining. The minister of music asked me to join the church and help direct the choirs there. I consented and continued to grow and hone my musical abilities. After approximately two months, the pastor inadvertently found out that I was a preacher. I had not shard this information with the pastor because I did not want anyone to think I had joined the church just to get ordained.

Music seemed to find its place with me in this place of worship. I decided to place my call to preach on the back burner and focus more on music. I would sing often and everything was going great. I started directing the choirs at this church. However, because I had answered the call to preach, God would not allow the call to go unanswered. A guest preacher, who knew me from the AME church, asked six other preachers in attendance if they were still preaching. The preachers looked at me to see what my answer would be. I answered, "Yes." Even though the other preachers in attendance did not believe my answer, the guest preacher did. The pastor of the church had been out sick for a few weeks, so several preachers decided to call him at home to tell him that I was a preacher. The pastor told the congregation to start calling me "Reverend" and had me show them a copy of the license I received in the AME church. The pastor verified that it was a valid license and told the church secretary to make a license for me. I received a license to preach from the Baptist Church that very day.

I was asked to preach one Sunday and soon after began teaching Youth and Young Adult Bible Study. I was involved in the life of this church and loved every minute of it. All of this happened within the first four months of my wife and me joining this Baptist church. In the beginning of the fourth month of our transition, our first child

was born. This was a traumatic experience because my wife had to have a C-section. It was during this time that I experienced the power of prayer. The baby would not come out after three hours of pushing. The heart rate was dropping and my wife was getting tired. The doctors said that it was a dangerous for my wife to keep pushing since there was no more amniotic fluid in her. The doctor called for an emergency C-section and she was wheeled out of the room. My mother-in-law and me were in the room and she suggested we pray for my wife. I was already crying but pulled it together to lead the prayer. Thereafter, I went into the operating room to provide support. I had been praying the whole time and talking to my wife. At 6:25 A.M., our son was born. The baby did not cry until I went over to the incubator and put my pinky finger into the hand of my newborn son. When the baby cried, I kissed him on the forehead and told him that everything was okay. The baby almost immediately stopped crying and turned his head toward me. I remember thinking, "Thank you, God, for allowing my son to make it. Thank you for allowing him to know my voice."

This is the same feeling I had when it came to God. I had a moment in life and did not think I was going to make it. I cried and God wiped away my tears. I felt lonely and God cured his loneliness. God called me and I answered the call. I knew the voice of the Lord. I had my prayers answered through the birth of my son. When I was born, I was born two months premature. I stayed in the hospital for two months to reach the proper weight and went home when I was healthy. During my lifetime, doctors told me that I would not be able to have children and this was the reality that I had accepted. Now, at twenty-three years of age, I watched my son coming into the world. God had not only

answered my prayers by keeping my wife safe, but He also answered my prayer and gave me a son.

This was a joyous occasion for us, although, it was a struggle becoming new parents in a short amount of time. My wife wanted a boy, but I wanted a girl. A few months after our son was born, we learned that we would be having another child. This child turned out to be the girl I wanted. She was born exactly thirteen months after our son. Our family seemed complete. God seemed to show favor in our life. God had done what the doctors said could not be done. I got the family I had wanted—a beautiful wife and two beautiful children. I felt that things were turning around. I had endured abuse, regained hope in people, started to come out of my shell, accepted the call to preach, gotten married and had two children. I then decided to add another dynamic to this thing called life—school!

I tried my hand at college from 1997 to 2001. This decision came after I left my singing group and answered the call to ministry. I wanted to run a restaurant at the time and was in school for Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism. This program, however, was phased out of the school, so I stopped going to school. I knew there was more to his life than what I was living. My pastor suggested that I go to school for Biblical Studies. I told my pastor, "If I get accepted, then I will go." To my surprise, I got accepted and felt this was God's way of telling me this was the route I was supposed to travel. My wife did not initially accept my decision to go back to school but eventually conceded. My decision to return to school added turmoil in our home, but I was determined to finish. I believed it was what God wanted me to do. I prayed that my wife would fully accept my decision and that everything would be okay.

During the time I was in school, my wife and me got into a heated debate and my wife packed up the children and left. For several weeks, I could not find my wife or my children. I called our mutual friends and even her family, but no one would tell me her whereabouts. This was devastating to me. This was the family I prayed for and wanted to keep, but in a swift moment, my family had been taken away from me. Work became secondary, school had taken a back seat, and some people in my church turned their backs on me. I could not believe that God would allow this to happen. I questioned God, and it was after I stopped questioning God that I heard the voice of the Lord. I was home alone and still had not heard from my family. It was then that God allowed me to calm down for a moment to hear from Him. I was forced to pray like never before. When I finished praying, the phone rang and it was my wife. My prayer had been answered! I needed to hear the voice of my family and God came through for me. This was the first time that I prayed and God answered my prayer immediately. The experience was overwhelming; I was elated to hear from my wife and children. She proceeded to tell me that she was not coming home and would be moving where she was currently staying. I understood and prayed again once the conversation conclude leaving the situation in God's hands.

A few weeks later, my wife decided to move back to Philadelphia to allow me to be closer to my children, but she did not come home. A few months passed, and after receiving counseling at their church, my wife decided to move back home. I felt whole again but knew something was still missing. I talked to my wife about going back to school. This time she understood my decision and supported me going to school. This was a great time for me, but the damage had seemingly been done. The separation my

wife and me experienced did more harm than good. There was more distance between us. We learned we were having another child at the same time we decided to divorce. I was at a loss. For peace of mind for the family, I decided we did not need to be a couple anymore. When the pastor of the church learned of this decision, I was "sat down" from every facet of ministry. This was devastating, something I had never experienced. I could not fathom what had taken place and sought the Lord. I waited for an answer from God, and God gave it to me. I heard the Lord say, "This is your doing, and these are the results." I realized that God had allowed me to decide how things were going to turn, and I had to suffer the consequences. I watched as others moved forward in ministry while I stayed still. I felt like I was in a wilderness of some kind. Like the children of Israel, it was my disobedience that landed me in the wilderness, and it was only God that was going get me out of it.

I turned to music during these desolate times. I continued to support the choir I directed and continued to give the minister of music songs that I believed would minister to the people. However, this got difficult for me, as I was not doing what I was called to do. It was at this moment that God opened a door. My gift of music seemed to have opened a door for me, and I had to make a decision: either sit and do nothing or stand and do something. I sought the Lord before I made a decision; I did not want to mess up again. I felt I had the answer and proceeded to direct the choir of another Baptist church.

I felt like I was in my element. The creative juices were flowing, and I started to feel alive again. I started to seek the Lord about this church becoming my "church home." After much prayer, God revealed that this was not the place for me, so I informed the pastor that I would be leaving the church. Still without a church home, I heard the

Lord tell me to go home. This meant that I was supposed to go back to the AME church. I never thought I would go backwards, but I felt this was where I needed to be. After I rejoined the church, the people acted as if they did not know me, even though they had known me for the first nineteen years of life. This was very disturbing and I began to seek the Lord again. For a while, I did not feel like my prayers were getting through to God because I decided to divorce my wife. A preacher told me that God would not be able to use me because of my decision, and I began to believe him. However, I could not believe that God would have allowed me to rejoin this church again to leave me alone. This time, I was provided support in the person of the pastor. My pastor was ecstatic over my decision to rejoin the AME church. I lost friends in the Baptist church because of this decision, but I knew I was following God's direction. I knew I was supposed to rely more on God at this time in my life and less on other forces.

My pastor encouraged me to focus on school and less on the ministry of the church. This proved to be great advice. I loved music and loved being involved in any facet of the music ministry, but believed it was time for me to turn my focus to the preaching side of ministry. I completed the first two years of seminary, which was a tremendous feat for me since others had told me that this could not be done. I was proud of my accomplishments and had gotten to a point in life where I could thank God for everything that happened in life. This was a new feeling, I realized that everything I endured, encountered, and went through was designed for me, and God was there to sustain me. I felt a little silly for recognizing this so late in life, but was glad to recognize it later versus never. I did know know that God would take me to another place in life and cause my faith to be strengthened.

After I completed the first two years of seminary, I wanted to make sure that I graduated on time. I consulted my pastor and the school and it was suggested that I move to Ohio to finish my last year of school. This move was ludicrous, I heard about Wilberforce through AME church history but never expected to go there, let alone live there. I was hesitant because I knew I would have to give up my job, leave my children, family, and friends. My son spoke words of wisdom to me. My son said, "Daddy, its okay. It will only be for a little while and you'll come back as much as you can." After hearing these words from my son, I felt better about leaving and moved to Ohio in June 2011.

The move was overwhelming at first. I had never lived anywhere other than Philadelphia. I had left everything that I had known to go to a foreign place. I felt alone for the first few weeks and, to top it off, I did not have a job. What was I going to do? How was I going to survive? How was I going to eat? How was I going to live this far away from home? It was then that God seemed to say, "If I did not leave you then, I will not leave you now." I started to feel a little better about being so far away from home, and God started to open doors all at once. I had a classmate who reached out to me and would open his doors for meals until I got things together. Within those same few weeks, I got a call from Wal-Mart in the neighboring city about a job. My faith had been put to the test, but God had been faithful.

The time in Ohio started to fly by. I had adjusted to this environment and was even led to associate with another AME church during my stay there. This seemed to be another move of God because I was welcomed with open arms and was once again given the opportunity to use my musical gifts to advance the Kingdom of God. I just was not

directing a choir at this time. My classmate was also a member of this church and very good friends with the first family of the church. The first family found out that I was driving to church by myself on Sundays and offered me a ride with them every Sunday. My classmate was also the reason I started singing at the church. The music ministry of this church became an outlet for ME during my stay in Ohio.

My faith grew during this time. I saw God's hand move in my life. I saw the power of prayer and recognized that God heard my prayers. I found a deeper confidence in God. I talked to God more than I had ever done before and God showed me that I was faithful despite some of the decisions I had made. I saw that I could depend on God and that God would take care of me. I went on to graduate on time and moved back to Philadelphia.

I had two jobs while in Ohio and had gotten accustomed to life in there, however I had to resume life in Philadelphia. When I arrived in Philadelphia, God, once again, moved on my behalf. I was a personnel manager for Wal-Mart before leaving for Ohio. When I arrived back in Philadelphia, a former manager had spoken to another manager about my job performance and recommended me for a personnel manager position at a new Wal-Mart. The manager received the recommendation and hired me as the personnel manager for the new store. God had taken care of my situation and again proved Himself to be faithful in my life.

I went through the process of ordination and on May 26, 2012 was ordained as a preacher in the AME church. This was a load lifted off of my shoulders. It was then suggested that I meet with the Presiding Bishop. The meeting took place a few days later, and on May 30, 2012, I was appointed as pastor of Bethel AME church. The appointment

was unexpected and I was thankful to God for the appointment and the opportunity to serve the congregation. The work God had begun in me had reached another level. The things I had been through had prepared me for this stage in ministry.

I had taken classes and attended many workshops, but stepping into the role of pastor was an overwhelming experience. I experienced many emotions when I received the appointment, so I contacted various people that had a hand in my arrival at this stage in life. The first person I called was my mother. The relationship between my mother and me had been repaired over the years. I felt my mother should be the first person to hear the news of the appointment. She was ecstatic! She began to cry on the phone and said she was proud of me. I told her that I loved her and thanked her for being there for me. When I was young, I felt like my mother was not there for me. Now, at thirty-three years of age, I was thanking my mother for being there. This act made me realize the power of forgiveness. God had showed me that everyone deserves to be forgiven and that feelings can be thrown into the sea of forgetfulness. I felt close to my mother in that moment and realized that, no matter what had happened, she was right there, even if I did not feel that she was.

The next person I called was my former pastor. When I called him, my former pastor asked, "Did you get an appointment?" I answered, "Yes," and then I told my pastor the name of the church. My pastor told me to love the people and that he was proud of me. He reminded me of the struggles that I endured to get an appointment to a church. I thanked my former pastor for the sound advice. The next person I called was the pastor I had served under in Ohio. This pastor was able to provide me with comfort while I was living in Ohio. The pastor was elated when he heard my good news. He encouraged

me and said I would do well. He also said that if I needed anything, to call anytime and he would help as much as he could.

V. E. Simms, Jr. is another person that had a positive impact on my life. Simms had been Michael's friend for the past fifteen years. He had always been one of my supporters and would pray for and with me at a moment's notice. Simms was also one of the survivors of the 1997 car crash in which I was also involved. I was always grateful for the friendship shared with Simms. Pastor T. E. Bailey is another friend that had an impact on my life. Pastor Bailey and me became friends during a class in seminary. Pastor Bailey was one of the reasons I started attending their church away from home in Ohio. Pastor Bailey kept me in prayer while I was in Ohio, and he and his family also kept me occupied so that I would not miss home so much.

The experiences I has endured have shaped me into a person that is continuously growing. I learned to trust God more and more as life went on. When I was ready to give up on life, God showed me that all of my needs would be provided. God was in control the entire time and had now allowed me to look back at my life for teaching moments. For example, having been abused by my mother's boyfriend, I was able to look back and see how not to treat my own children. I also learned not to harbor ill will towards anyone and how to persevere through tough times. I became a go-getter and would not let anything or anyone stop me from reaching my desired goals.

I chose to go to school for Human Resources so that I would be in a position to help other people establish themselves. The field of Human Resources allowed me to get involved in the lives of people. As a pastor, I am available when congregants need me. I am still finding my niche since going into the pastorate in May. The journey is not an

easy one and there is still a lot to learn. However, I do not take my position lightly or take it for granted. As a minister, I learned to be approachable. People like to know they have someone they can talk to and someone with whom they can confide. As a child, I did not feel that I had anyone I could talk to; as an adult, I makes it a point to not make anyone feel the way I did. An outlet always needs to be given, even if people decide not to use or take advantage of it.

I also find ways to make sure there is no gap in ministry between age groups. I believe that everyone needs to be ministered to in one fashion or another. As a parent, I show unconditional tough love. I tell my children that I love them all the time. I believe that children should not have to look for love from anyone outside of their family. I provide my children a listening ear, a loving heart, a strong shoulder, and a support system. I grow each day because I am always learning something new about myself.

My ministry has evolved and will continue to evolve because of the people who will come in contact with God throughout my ministry. The ministry placed in my hands will allow people to see that God is actively involved in the lives of His creation. I see that God has allowed me the opportunity to help develop others, and I have learned, through the unspoken motto of Human Resources, in reference to ministry, "It's not about you; it's about what you can and will do for others." I never entered the ministry for self but for the betterment of those who come in contact with me. The opportunities that have been given to me have allowed me to apply the scriptures to every aspect of my life. I am living through the practical application of the scriptures. I have also personally recognized the strength of the Negro spirituals and the power of music in one's life. I will

always make sure that any ministry I comes in contact with has God at the forefront and people in view.

I view my life as a spiritual journey that continues to be shaped and changed with every situation. When I feel that a lesson has been learned, another moment rears its head to show there is more to learn. The model of my ministry is to reach as many people as possible. I believe that the church is supposed to be the hub of the community and not just somewhere to go. The church should be viewed as a body of believers that gather to learn how to grow the body of believers, not from a church membership standpoint, but a body of Christ standpoint. The sense of urgency I exhibit in ministry stems from my experiences throughout life. A pastor once said to me, "Why do we put more emphasis on assessments and less emphasis on true evangelism?" This question has stayed on my mind since the question was asked of me. I wrestle with questions all the time and, if I wrestle, then others must wrestle as well. The church needs to be the place where the answers to life's questions are answered. People have their own way of dealing with life, but what role should the church play in the lives of people? If the church begins to tackle some of the spoken and unspoken issues in our communities, then more people will want to become members of the body of Christ. Christ has to be presented in a way that shows people that they need, not only when trouble comes, but before trouble gets here.

"If you know your history, then you know where you're coming from." This is a statement a former professor used to make at the beginning of each class. The statement still rings true in my life; in order to know where you are going, you have to know where you have been. The context portion of this chapter will include a brief history of the state of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia County. It will also include information about

Philadelphia, the city in which Campbell African Methodist Episcopal Church resides, and the church itself.

To understand Campbell African Methodist Episcopal Church, we will look at a brief history of the city of Philadelphia.

> The city of Philadelphia, as laid out by William Penn, comprised only that portion of the present city situated between South and Vine Streets and Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. In fact, the city proper was that portion between High (Market) Street and Dock Creek. Here is where the pioneers dug caves in the banks of the Delaware or built huts on the land higher up. Meanwhile, the women equally busy in their sphere, had lighted their fire on the bare earth, and having "their kettle slung between two poles upon a stick transverse," thus prepared the meal of homely and frugal fare for the repast of diligent builders. Native Americans were more or less present, either as spectators of the improvements then progressing, or, venders of their game and venison from the neighboring wilds. The Swedes and Dutch, who were the earliest settlers, as neighbors, brought their productions to market as a matter of course. Settlements were made, however, outside of these boundaries, and in the course of time they became separately incorporated and had separate governments, making congeries of towns and districts, the whole group being known abroad simply as Philadelphia. Several of these were situated immediately contiguous to the "city proper": Southwark and Moyamensing in the south, and Northern Liberties, Kensigton, Spring Garden and Penn District to the north, and West Philadelphia to the west—all of which were practically one town continuously built up. Besides these, there were a number of other outlying townships, villages and settlements near the built-up town, though detached from it. Among these were Bridesburg, Frankford, Harrowgate, Holmesburg, the unincorporated Northern Liberties, Port Richmond, Nicetown, Rising Sun, Fox Chase, Germantown, Roxborough, Falls of Schuylkill, unincorporated Penn township, Francisville, Hamilton Village, Mantua, Blockley, Kingsessing and Passyunk.[1]

Campbell African Methodist Episcopal Church is located in the Frankford Section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

> Before the Europeans arrived, Frankford was home to the Taconick Indians, a tribe of the Lenni Lenape. They lived along the banks of the Quessionwonmick River, now known as the Frankford Creek. The stone they used to grind their corn is still evident in the creek as it flows through the grounds of Friends Hospital.

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[1] "Philadelphia," accessed March 15, 2014, www.ushistory.org/philadelphia/philadelphia.html.

> The Swedes and Dutch arrived in Frankford as trappers. By the 1660s the Swedes had established farms and a grist mill along the Frankford Creek. The Swedes made their settlement along creeks and traveled by water. There was a trail at Frankford Avenue before the English settlers arrived.
>
> Frankford was sold by William Penn as a 20,000 acre parcel to the Society of Free Traders, a group of London businessmen. Penn purchased the Swedish grist mill tract of 200 acres from Lasse Cock and his brother for the Society of Free Traders. The land purchase was known as the Manor of Frank, from which Frankford derives it name.
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> The principal purchasers of land in the Manor of Frank were Thomas Fairman, Henry Waddy, Robert Adam, and Thomas Seary. Fairman was Penn's lieutenant. He was living at Shaxamackson when Penn arrived. Penn requested that Fairman establish a meeting in Frankford. The first meeting was held at the home of Sarah Seary on July 3, 1683. It was decided that a log meeting house would be built on land donated by Fairman. The meeting was held at the homes of friends until the meeting house was completed. The first building was erected in 1684 on a site now bordered by Waln and Unity Streets. The brick and stone building now standing on the site dates from 1775 and is the oldest meeting house in the city.[2]

Henry Williams and Robert Ulle in their work *Frankford, Philadelphia: A 19th Century Urban Black Community,* write,

> The Black presence in Frankford, although never large was no significant either. In 1810, the number of Blacks first exceeded one hundred, steadily increasing to almost eight hundred by 1880. Whites in Frankford, however, were experiencing an even greater demographic expansion, and the proportion of the Black population to the whole declined from almost nine percent in 1810 to slightly over five percent in 1880.[3]

The writers further posit:

> The social and cultural nature of this small Black community is revealed to some extent by the characteristics of its household heads. Household head and their families moved from place to place, much at their white counterparts in numerous other nineteenth-century American towns and cities. Blacks, like whites, were constantly on the moves, rarely staying on one place long enough to be enumerated in two successive ten-year censuses. In the first eight decades of the nineteenth century, no more than forty-five per cent of the Black male household

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[2]"New Philadelphia History," accessed on March 15, 2014 www.nephillyhistory. com/hnep 1994/frankford.htm.

> heads stayed long enough to appear in two successive census reports, and in two decades only thirty percent stayed in the necessary length of time.

According to www.city-data.com, the last population census taken lists the population of Frankford at 63,785 people.[4] Of the persons living in the Frankford section, 32.4 percent are below the poverty level, according to *The Pew Charitable Trusts*.[5] The research shown from www.city-data shows the following: White population: 13,849, Black population: 25,912, American Indian population: 149, Asian population: 3,118, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population: 23, Some other race population: 163, Two or more races population: 1,308, and Hispanic or Latino population: 22,169.[6]

On March 2, 2014, I was appointed as pastor of Campbell A.M.E. Church in Philadelphia, PA. The church has been in existence since the early 1800's. In an effort to better understand the church, I asked one of the members for the church history. The member provided the following information:

> It would seem that the History of Campbell A.M.E. Church cannot be written without mentioning some of the facts which led to the beginning of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Richard Allen, who guided the growth and organization of the A.M.E. Church, was born a slave in 1760, who received no formal education, but taught himself. He worked, saved and bought his own freedom. He devoted his life to achieving freedom and equality for Blacks. In 1786, Allen began preaching at St. Georges Methodist Church, Philadelphia, PA. On a Sunday in November, 1787, Allen and other Black worshippers were ordered into segregated seats in the gallery. Several Blacks were threatened and shoved while in the midst of prayer. When the prayer was over, Richard Allen's group rose to their feet and left the church, never to return. In 1793, Allen bought

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[4]City Data.com, accessed March 15, 2014, http://www.city-data.com/zips/19124.html.

[5]Pew Trust, accessed March 15, 2014, www.pewtrusts.org/philaresearch.

[6]City data.com, accessed March 15, 2014, http://www.city-data.com/zips/19124. Html #ixzz 3P053qN5A.

an old blacksmith shop and converted it into the First Bethel Church—the first place of worship owned by African Americans in America. In April 1816, a conference of five Black churches was called (Philadelphia, Baltimore, Wilmington, Attleboro, PA and Salem, NJ). The African Methodist Episcopal Church was formed. Richard Allen was ordained an Elder by Bishop Francis Asbury of the Methodist Church, and consecrated the first Bishop of the A.M.E. Church.

In the year of 1807 a group of 28 Christians were invited by Sister Sara Congo to her home, 1757 Plum Street (formerly Bowsers Lane), for prayer and to organize a church in the Frankford community. This prayer band formed the nucleus for what is now Campbell A.M.E. Church. The exact date of organization is not known. However, an old marble tablet in the present building reads, "Bishop Campbell Chapel—2nd A.M.E. Church". Two cornerstones have these inscriptions: "Rebuilt in 1818 and Rebuilt in 1870." Campbell is named in memory of Rev. Jabez Pitt Campbell, a former Bishop of the A.M.E. Connection. It is believed that the 28 members continued to hold worship service at Sister Congo's until they moved to the present site on Kinsey Street. Sometime between 1807 and 1813, the group erected a small frame church to hold their services. Records at City Hall indicate that the present site was purchased by "The African Methodist Episcopal Church" of the Borough of Frankford in the County of Philadelphia, from Thomas A. Cuff of Frankford, in the twenty-third Ward of the City of Philadelphia, Minister of the Gospel, and Caroline C., his wife, for the sum of Four hundred and Seventy-five dollars on the ninth day of May, in the year 1885.Many of the early pioneers of Campbell sleep in the church burial grounds. The graves of the first Pastor of Campbell, Rev. Richard Robinson and his wife Taner, are located at the right of the front entrance to the church. Civil War Veteran, Moses Bedford, is buried in the church cemetery. Yearly memorial services, which included the flag-raising and gun salute, were conducted each May 30th by marching bands and uniformed War Veterans. They then proceeded to parade to the other black burial ground at Meadow Street. Also buried in Campbell's cemetery is Sister Agnes Spencer, the first woman licensed to preach from Campbell. Campbell was the only black church in the area until 1869. During this period up to 1880, Campbell was the major black religious institution in Frankford. The church building served as a Way Station of the Underground Railroad. Also, it served as a social and general meetinghouse for the total community. Between 1838 and 1840 it held the first classes of the African Colored School. Campbell's sanctuary was beautifully renovated in 1975, which helped to enhance the priceless memorial stained glass windows. The windows depict many symbols in the Holy Bible. The lower portion of the windows identifies names of pioneer members and various church organizations. There is a

> host of names of dedicated members who have served Campbell faithfully. The large window over the front entrance is illuminated at night by a stainless steel floodlight. The words "Prayer Changes Things" and the "Lighted Cross" over the organ and the "Processional Cross" all have added to the beauty of our worship service. The parsonage at 1661 Kinsey St., next door to the church, housed many of our Pastors and their families.

It helpful to look at the historical journey that the church had traveled. Previously, whenever I became a leader in a church, I already knew the history of that church and how to move forward. In the present context, there was a former musician for one of the choirs under the previous administration. The ties of the relationship between the choir me were severed when the pastor of the church decided that the choir was not ready for the choir to have a musician and the commitment level needed to be stronger. We parted ways and the only contact I had with any members of the congregation from that point forward was when we saw each other at various youth meetings in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. I had no had direct contact with the context again until I was appointed as pastor of the church on March 2, 2014. I had to find out the state of the church given the churches located in the city of Philadelphia were getting ready for the Annual Conference of the AME church.

The Annual Conference, in terms of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, is a conference that looks at all that has transpired in the various churches that make us the Annual Conference. Pastors are allowed to highlight successes in the life of the church and under their administration. The Bishop of the District, under which the Annual Conference falls, makes appointments at these meeting for pastors to either return to their church or will move them to another church based on need, promotion, etc. Each church is responsible for a certain assessment and the context had programs in places that had the ability to raise the assessment to report to the Annual Conference. I did not

immediately look at the history and state of the church, but decided to do this at a later date. The members of the context had planned things to end the year on a productive note and properly executed programs to reach their goals.

In the midst of the planning and execution of the planned programs, it was necessary to determine who were the members of the context and the leaders in the context. Several meeting took place over the next few months. There were many leaders and members effectively working to support the church. It was during an impromptu moment in a worship experience, members decide to voice their feelings as to their position about the previous administration. Some stated they were doubtful as to the state of the church. Some said they did know how they could learn from a person of my age and others expressed their objections to the transition from the previous administration to me being appointed as pastor. This was shocking. What was usually a moment in the service for persons to go to each other to ask forgiveness became a time of expressing their disapproval of the changes that had taken place.

There were several members of the congregation that apologized for the way I had been treated to that point and asked for forgiveness. Others voiced their displeasure and decided they needed to find another place of worship. I recognized that persons had lost hope in the direction of the church because of the transition. Some of the members felt as if their way had been lost and their family had been torn apart. This was an unexpected event. The event moved me to continue with the project of rebuilding hope in the life of the context based on the Negro Spirituals.

The context is full of potential. There is an outreach ministry in place that feeds approximately one hundred families per week. There is a young person's department

where approximately thirty to forty active young people between the ages of two and twenty-six. The missionary society collects food to deliver to those who are less fortunate. There are two worship services held at 8:00 A.M. and 11:00 A.M. These services are open to all people. There are several Bible study classes in place to lead the context and community in biblical and theological education. There are other programs that aid in uplifting the community and allow the context to be a staple in the community of Frankford and the city of Philadelphia at large.

Transition does not have to be a bad thing. In the African Methodist Episcopal Church, pastors are only given their appointment for one year. At the end of the Annual Conference, the pastor can be reassigned to their current charge or assigned to a new charge. The context has to ability to function in the transition and I looked to lift up the theological pillar of hope seen through the eyes of the slaves. The slaves had the ability to keep their eyes on God although their bodies were enslaved. Slaves were unjustly treated, but their attention was on God to deliver them from their situation. The situation was a favorable one but continued to be their focus. The context of the researcher has the ability to keep its attention on God in the midst of transition. If they do this, they will be able to find the hope needed to move forward in ministry as effective church leaders in the community.

In looking at my spiritual journey and the journey of the context, abandonment, self-worth and hope were the reoccurring themes that presented themselves. The first theme that is prevalent is abandonment. In my spiritual journey, abandonment can be seen during the period of my abuse. I experienced abandonment when my mother would not aid me in resolving the abuse. There was no one to whom I could turn. I also felt

abandoned by my father. When I approached my father about the abuse, my father's response was, "I am not the man of the house, so there is nothing I can do." This inaction caused tension between my father and me. I thought I could turn to my family for assistance. The immediate members of my family offered no response, and although I did not get depressed about the situation, I felt abandoned by everyone around me. There was no one to whom I could talk. My mother would not offer assistance, and she turned a deaf ear to my plea. It was my family's inaction that caused me to shut them out of mu life.

I also experienced abandonment from the members of the Baptist Church I was a member when I chose to divorce my wife. When the initial decision had been made to go through with the divorce, counseling was sought. I stood firm on the decision to go through with the divorce. I was then stopped from doing every formal facet of ministry from that time until I rejoined the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This was not so bad at first since both my wife and me had our ministry responsibilities taken away. However, the pastor did not remove my wife from her ministry positions, and this was upsetting.

At this time, I could not understand why my wife was not stripped of any responsibilities. She was able to continue teaching Sunday school and singing in the choir. The feeling of abandonment did not occur until everyone I spoke to in church stopped speaking. The people I considered friends decided to sever ties until I decided to go back to my wife. I told them I could not make that decision and, in turn, lost several friends. This was devastating; I could not understand how friends could leave me during this time in my life. I could not understand this, especially since most of these persons were my friends first. I thought I would never feel abandoned because everyone I let into

my adult life seemed as if they would be around for a long time. My friends did not understand my course of action and thought it best to leave me alone. They did not, however, stop speaking to my wife. I truly felt alone, and this feeling took me back to my childhood.

I was appointed to Campbell AME church after serving approximately two years at Bethel AME in Beverly, New Jersey. When I attended my first week intensive class at United Theological Seminary in August 2012, Dr. Donnell Moore said many things that spoke to my life and ministry context. For example, Dr. Moore said, "Wherever you are in ministry right now, you are there for a reason and a purpose. You are there because, whatever the ministry is going through now, you have already experienced it and you were sent there to, not only lend a hand, but to lead them out." I understood what Dr. Moore meant, but it did not hit home until I held a meeting with the officers of the church.

When I was appointed to Campbell AME church, the feeling experienced did not seem to be real. This appointment was a promotion. This church is said to be the second church started in African Methodism. This is a strong church filled with loving people; most are related to each other, which also makes this a family church. The church can be self-sustaining if necessary, but most do what needs to be done to work with the pastor.

On the first Sunday in April, I experienced several individuals who felt as if they were left out in the cold. Some of the members felt like they did not know what would happen to them since their former pastor was reassigned after being there for five years. Some of the members were distraught over the move and began to think of themselves as being less than who they were because of the move. The members did not know what

would happen to them now that they had a new pastor. Some of them started to ask if something detrimental happened as to why the former pastor was reassigned to another charge. Some of the members had already decided to leave because of the transition. This feeling of abandonment spread because of the transition of the former pastor.

I also experienced the feeling of self-worth throughout my life. When I had to endure abuse as a child, I did not know my worth. In fact, I did not think that I was worthy of anything and deserved to be treated as if I was nothing. Granted, my behavior during my elementary years was not the best, however, the abuse became unbearable. Sadness never reached the level of depression, as far as I could tell, but I began to think less of myself because of the abuse. It was not until I read some of the words of the Negro spirituals that I realized my self-worth. I saw that, even in the midst slavery, the slaves did not lose sight of who they were. They did not rely on what the slave masters tried to teach them, and they never gave up trying to escape. They never gave up on freedom. The slaves did not accept that they were animals. They learned that they were God's children and that trouble would not last forever. The slaves kept on pressing and this perseverance allowed me to see that giving up was not an option. I learned who I was and acknowledging that I did not deserve abuse. This learning process was hard because I felt worthless for so long. I am still in the process of learning. With all that I have been given, and all of the opportunities that have presented themselves to me, I am somebody in Christ.

The members of Campbell AME church also experienced the theme of loss of self-worth. Some of the members thought it was something the church did or did not do, as to why the former pastor was moved. One member in particular felt as if they had no

direction because of the leadership the former pastor provided during his tenure. This member stated they lost faith in the church and stated she did not feel as if the church was worthy to keep the former pastor, which is why they were moved. This conversation during a morning worship experience awakened these same feelings in another member who expressed they were experiencing the same thoughts. The members knew they had taken care of their former pastor and started to think of various things that could have been done to keep him. These are persons who had not experienced the itinerancy system during their time at Campbell. The members began to think the church was less than they were because of the reassignment. This change in leadership made some of the members experience a loss of self-worth in relation to the church.

The final theme found in both the spiritual autobiography and context analysis was that of hope. In various instances in his my, I experienced a feeling hope. I first experienced hope when God gave me the outlet of music to take my mind off of the abuse endured as a child. The music filled a void in my life. Then, the Negro spirituals gave me hope that the abuse was not going to last for the rest of my life. The spirituals provided me an opportunity to see that there had been others who had to endure even harsher abuse and yet were able to keep their sanity. The slaves were able to band together to create a form of music that provides them with hope. The spirituals gave me hope when I felt as if I was in a hopeless situation.

Another instance when I experienced hope was when the abuse of my childhood finally stopped. My mother finally saw the abuse firsthand and put a stop to it. I was relieved and felt as if a weight had been lifted. I regained a sense of hope in people and realized that there were people in the world who cared about me. I saw the hurt in my

mother's eyes when she saw her son being beaten and ended the relationship with her boyfriend. My hope in my family was restored. When my mother told the rest of the family what had been happening, the family rallied around me and provided comfort.

My sense of hope was also restored after I was sat down from every facet of organized ministry and lost hope in the church. I did not know what my next move was going to be or what I was supposed to do. When I prayed for guidance, the answer came through a friend who had started a church and was looking for a music director. God had restored my hope in the church. At the time, I could not understand being pushed away from ministry, and the things that were said to me were heart wrenching. But when all hope seemed lost, God stepped in the midst of the situation and provided me another means to do ministry. Yet again, music was the vehicle God used to provide hope.

My hope was restored when I received the pastoral appointment at Bethel AME church, in Beverly, New Jersey. I got reassigned to the pastoral charge of Campbell AME church, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I assumed that, because I was not willing to reconcile my marriage and because I had left the AME church, I would never pastor a church, or at least it would take a long time to do so. I decided to attend seminary and, when I graduated, I was appointed to a church a week and a half later. I had actually given up on the idea of becoming a pastor. However, once again, God stepped in and provided me what was missing; hope.

Campbell AME church has experienced some major hardships throughout its history as most churches do. When I became the pastor of Campbell, some of the members had experienced abandonment and could not see any light at the end of the tunnel. When an impromptu conversation started during a worship experience, one of the

members expressed a feeling of hope that I had been appointed as the right pastor for right now to follow the previous administration. The feelings expressed by the member spread to other members who expressed their support and encouragement as the church continues to move forward.

The ideas shared by Dr. Moore became true in the meeting held at Bethel in September 2012 and continue to become true in his new pastoral charge in March 2014. I never told the church the things I endured as a child. I never shared with the congregation that our feelings were the same. I did not understand why me of all people had been sent to this church until I attended the intensive in September 2012 at United Theological Seminary. Dr. Moore asked me a question on the first night of the intensive. At first, I thought I knew why I decided to further my education—until Dr. Moore continued to speak. When Dr. Moore told me the reason I was sent to my charge was to get them out of the very thing I already endured, I felt like dancing, shouting and crying at the same time. The conversation gave validity to everything I had gone through up to that very day. I knew that I had been sent to the church for a reason, but I could not understand why. Since I am the type of person who asks as many questions as possible so I will not mess up anything, I wanted to know what he could offer this church. When Dr. Moore finished speaking that night, everything became clearer and started making sense. I had gone through periods of abandonment and loss of self-worth to learn that there is hope. I never thought I would encounter a church that had experienced the same emotions or experiences. I know now that other people I will encounter will have had the same types of experiences and emotions, and they will need to know that hope can be found in the midst of adversity. With God, hope can be restored.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ARTS IN THIS MINISTRY

There are various themes and theological pillars that are evident in the researcher's spiritual autobiography, context analysis, historical foundation, biblical foundation and theological work. These themes provide the framework for the researcher's project: "The Message Hasn't Changed: Fostering Hope Through the Spirituals in the 21st Century When Administering Pastoral Care." The purpose of this foundational work is to explore the practical portion of this study as well as other disciplines that speak to the subject of fostering hope through the messages of the spirituals. The disciplines explored are sociology and anthropology. These disciplines each have their own voice when speaking about the messages of the spirituals.

In our group, "Preaching Prophetically in a Post Modern Culture," one of our peer sessions was held on the campus of Virginia Union University. During this session, Dr. William H. Curtis was the conference preacher during the Ellison-Jones Convocation in 2012. It was during the peer session that the question arose, "What is prophetic preaching?" Dr. Curtis' response was as follows:

> What is prophetic preaching? That is what I am sitting here wrestling with. I define prophetic preaching a little differently. I don't think it's social commentary, necessarily. I don't think its Afrocentricity, necessarily. I don't think it's the wedding of the two. I see prophetic preaching as heralding the necessity for the centrality of the sovereignty of God in the life of a believer, that culture, and that context. Whether that includes racial issues, social issues, gender-specific issues, I think we have watered prophetic preaching down to our cultural issues,

> and that's not necessarily for me prophetic preaching. So, then, postmodern prophetic preaching would be how does that look in post-modernity? How do you now deal with racial issues with a Black president, and what now would be prophetic when, as Barbara Amos said, which I thought was ingenious, this election was won on the solidarity of those on the periphery? Does prophetic in the future now mean not just Black solidarity, but does it mean Black and Latino solidarity? I wrestle with all of that. That's my loose definition of prophetic preaching. And for me, the current contemporary garments of that dilutes and destroys some of what has been the straight lines of separation between races, genders, countries, etc.

This definition of prophetic preaching speaks to this post-modern generation. Jimmy Long, author of the book *Generating Hope,* states, "To reach Generation X and coming post-modern generations we need to 'live in the present from a future perspective.' We need to live in the present and meet people where they are in the midst of their pain and suffering. More than anything else this generation needs hope for the future, since at present it has no hope." Prophetic preaching in this post-modern culture should be able to speak to those with no hope. The Church of today should be able to show this generation that God is our hope; therefore, to hope is to trust, not in ourselves, but in God. Long states:

> I am convinced that the best message we can offer society today is a biblical message of hope. Generation X and the emerging postmodern world are searching for something to guide them as they live in the present and look toward the future. We have a golden opportunity to proclaim God's hope. If we do not provide direction, others will. Biblical hope is not built on confidence, but it builds confidence because it is based on the character of God, not human potential or human capacity. [1]

Graham Johnston posits in his work *Preaching to Postmodern World*:

> More than anything, today's preaching holds out hope in Christ, a hope than can satisfy people's longing for certainty and shatter their cynicism. The tension for

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[1]Jimmy Long, *Generating Hope: A Strategy for Reaching the Postmodern Generation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 126.

> postmodern listeners lies between the heart and the mind. The mind tells them nothing is real or trustworthy, but the heart still longs for the clarity of meaning and purpose."[2]

Johnston quotes Charles Swindoll, who is quoted by Marshall Shelley, author of *Changing Lives through Preaching and Worship*:

> We live in complex and confusing times, and the future promises more of the same. The proliferation of information and the acceleration of change have left most of us struggling to find footing… All of these changes may cause us to question Paul's choice of love (as the greatest virtue) and say, "But the greatest of these is hope."[3]

This section looks through the lens of prophetic preaching since my peer group focus deals with effective communication to contemporary audiences. I choose to look at the virtue of hope through the lens of the messages of the spirituals. The vehicle of prophetic preaching will also be used in order to provide one type of pastoral care. When the enslaved Africans were involved in the invisible institution, their songs spoke of hope in freedom. The songs allowed them to express their thoughts regarding a world that existed without slavery, a place where the slaves would be home with their Lord and be free.

Wyatt Tee Walker posits in his work, *Somebody's Calling My Name,* Wendel Whalum, a contemporary authority on the Afro-American Spiritual, notes that despite the Spirituals being rooted in the Black life-style that was desperately trying to cope with poor social conditions, there was never acceptance of those poor conditions because hope was always the Spiritual's central theme."[4] Walker further states, "From a sociological

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[2]Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-first-century Listeners* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 135-136.

[3]Marshall Shelley, *Changing Lives through Preaching and Worship: 30 Strategies for Powerful Communication* (Nashville, TN: Moorings, 1995), 58.

[4]Wyatt Tee. Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name: Black Sacred Music and Social Change* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 45-46.

point of view, perhaps the primary contribution of the spirituals to the slave community was the cohesive influence they had upon the invisible church and the general populace of the slave quarters. It was the music of the slave more than anything that gave them a sense of community."[5] Walker also quotes W. E. B. Dubois to show the social significance of the spiritual:

> And so fateful chance the Negro folk-song—the rhythmic cry of the slave—stands today not simply as the sole American music, but is the most beautiful expression of human experience but on this side of the seas. It has been neglected, it has been, and is, despised, and above all it has been persistently mistaken and understood; but notwithstanding still remains is a singular spiritual heritage of the nation and the greatest gift of the Negro people."[6]

Sociological Discipline

Walker posits, "The spiritual is of social significance not only because of the religious message it bears but also because of its widespread musical influence."[7] Sociology is defined as the study of human social behavior, especially the study of the origins, organization, institutions, and development of human society. From a sociological standpoint, the slaves had to be organized in order to complete their work, to communicate with one another and to survive. M. Christopher Brown posits in his work, *The Comprehension of Traditional Negro Spirituals: the Meaning of the Messages of the Music*, "Yes, slaves had to walk in a lonesome valley by themselves, but from another standpoint, when they combined their band with their relatives and friends, they could get more and different things done. They could also have experiences that gave them a

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[5]Ibid., 47.

[6]Ibid., 47-48.

[7]Ibid., 48.

different slant and insight from those of the individual alone."[8] John Cruz writes, "The role of culture as an interpretive enterprise thus appears to have had a rather decisive impact on how the spirituals transposed from its status as a moral item or testimony to that of an abstract object or artifact, precisely through being defined as a genuine quintessential feature of black authenticity."[9] In dealing with the sociological side of the spirituals, John Cruz deals with this simple construct:

> The singing is heard as enigmatic noise by an overseer on the ship at sea moving somewhere along the middle passage; or heard by a young and enslaved Frederick Douglas, and remembered (differently in the process of reflection and critical interpretation) as he composes his memoirs; or heard by the white abolitionists whose own sense of pathos guides him or her to anticipate that this experience will be repeated again and again; the slave's song is captured as a fleeting specimen fitting some mid nineteenth century protoethnographic schema of 'natural history'; or it is heard by the man of scientific training who now knows that it has a proper place within a taxonomy of ethnologically conceived folkways.[10]

Cruz suggests that, in order to understand Black music, we must dig beneath it. We must look at how it was heard before the emergence of what he termed "modern ethnosympathy." This deeper level of study deals with was looked at as "meaningless noise." He notes there are three distinct modes of hearing Black music that can be identified: incidental hearing, instrumental hearing, and pathos-oriented hearing.[11] He then goes on to explain each of these modes:

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[8]M. Christopher Brown II, "The Comprehension of Traditional Negro Spirituals: The Meaning and the Message of the Music," accessed August 2013, http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet /ERICS ervlet?accno=ED364854.

[9]Jon Cruz, *Culture on the Margins: The Black Spiritual and the Rise of American Cultural Interpretation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 22.

[10]Ibid., 36.

[11]Ibid., 43.

> By incidental hearing I referred to the kinds of accounts logged by white observers who did not intend to hear back music, but who instead stumbled upon it. The responses reflect a little of what we today would acknowledge as sympathetic comprehension. Instrumental hearing, on the other hand, involved attempts by overseers to use music for nonmusical objectives. Owners could induce slaves to sing quick-paced songs to speed up the labor process, or could force them to make sheer sounds as a way to monitor them, or could draw upon a slave's musical skills to augment his or her market value. In contrast, pathos-oriented hearing, as I shall argue, marks the modern humanistic turn; it champions black song making as a window on the inner lives of slaves. Pathos-oriented hearing is thus the most important cultural development that are trace in this study."[12]

Cruz posits, "Whether they were coerced or acted by their own will, slaves put music to work. To slaves, music was cultural work-the work of solidarity. Through music slaves were able to ease the harshness of their lot while exercising one of the few options available for a collective black voice."[13] He further writes, "Music making was also a refuge where a great deal of important communication could take place, and became especially crucial, fragile, and precious when mere talking among slaves was strongly discouraged or when talk itself was not enough to meet their collective need to work out the pain of slavery."[14]

Cruz leans to the work of Jacques Attali to support his definition of the three modes of hearing. In Jacques Attali's work, *The Political Economy of Music,* Attali attempts to reassess the function of music within the context of social change.[15] Attali writes:

> Music can function as socially disruptive noise. When it does, it carries the seeds of social transformation. As noise, music is socially disruptive because it makes

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[12]Ibid., 43-44.

[13]Ibid., 50.

[14]Ibid., 54.

[15]Ibid., 63.

> audible the new world that will gradually become visible even to the established ways of seeing. In this capacity, music has the potential to 'impose itself and regulate the order of things; it is not only the image of things, but the transcending of the everyday, the herald of the future.' This makes music 'prophetic' in that it 'explores much faster than material reality can, the entire range of possibilities in a given code.[16]

Cruz suggests music takes shape within social and institutional struggles. He then states, "As a social construct, the framework of music as noise restores our critical grasp of connections between cultural practices and social struggles. It is this cultural complexity that needs to be grasped."[17] Cruz says the spiritual was the "best of what the slave and even the freed slave could produce, either as testimony or artifact, to complement the kind of class stewardship that was presupposed in this aesthetic and moral recognition and knowledge of a world of lesser men and women. In this regard, the spiritual represented what the civilizing process had bequeathed to the racial margin. The spiritual—as practice, as phenomenon, as spectacle, and as cultural performance—served as a major element in the modern end of century cartography of Black expressivity."[18] Cruz further writes:

> Black music on American soil was constituted in response to the systematic pulverization of a captured people who had imposed upon them the culture of their captors. Its form reflects both the determinant and untranscendable relationship and the resultant nuances of Black culture production. As a social text embedded in a social context, black song making spoke from and to the indomitable; Frederick Douglass brought this aspect sharply into view in 1845. Even the Reverend Lockwood, who brought the first spiritual, Go Down Moses,

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[16]Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 11.

[17]Cruz, Culture on the Margins, 65.

[18]Ibid., 159.

> into print in 1861, retained in his discussion the crucial sociological connections that linked black lives and social relations."[19]

Anthropological Discipline

Anthropology is the study of humans, past and present.[20] In Guy Johnson's article, Johnson looks into several areas of the music created by the slaves and compares with the white music of that time. He begins the article:

> When the Negro came to this country he came in contact with musical culture presumably different form that to which he had been accustomed. What is the relation of his subsequent musical products to the African and European music? Does the American Negro music retain a large share of African traits? Is it primarily a borrowing of the white man's music, or is it a fusion, a synthesis, partaking of both African and European music traits?"[21]

In *Slave Songs of the United States, the Compiler's Posit,* "The greatest number of the songs which have come into our possession seem to be the natural and original production of a race of remarkable musical capacity and very teachable, which has been long enough associated with the more cultivated race to have become imbued with the mode and spirit of European music—often, nevertheless, retaining a distinct tinge of their native Africa."[22]

Johnson points out that Jeanette Robinson Murphy, who published several articles on Negro music and interpreted the spirituals from the lecture platform, said, "I came

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[19]Ibid., 163.

[20]American Anthropological Association, accessed on December 12, 2013http://www.aaanet.org/about/whatisanthropology.cfm.

[21]Guy B. Johnson, "The Negro Spiritual: A Problem in Anthropology," *American Anthropologist* 33, no. 2 (April/May 1931): 157, accessed December 12, 2013, doi:10.1525/aa.1931.33.2.02a00020.

[22]William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison, *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York, NY: A. Simpson, 1867), viii.

early to the conclusion, based on Negro authority, that the greater part of their music, their methods, their scale… came straight from Africa."[23] Henry Edward Krehbiel, in his work, *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, states, "Similarities exist between the folksongs of all peoples. Their overlapping is a necessary consequence of the proximity and intermingling of peoples, like modifications of language; and there are some characteristics which all songs except those of the rudest and most primitive kind must have in common."[24] Johnson continues, "Structurally the white songs and the spirituals cannot be differentiated. They have the same types of stanzas, refrain, and chorus patterns, the same simplicity and repetition, the same tendency to make a large number of stanzas by merely varying a word or two."[25]

John Lovell, Jr., in his work, *Black Song: the Forge and the Flame*, does not agree with Johnson's notion that Black folksongs were borrowed from white folksongs. Lovell states:

> We've already shown that the slaves belonged to a singing tradition that was centuries old and that they had often adapted to changes in language, setting, and theme as dictated by new circumstances. When one recalls that the Negro spiritual was present and was continuously created, in areas where there were no meetings, in addition to those areas where they were denied the privilege of attending, Prof. Jackson's effort to establish the white spiritual is a pain, forlorn hope—if one is willing to decide on the facts."[26]

Lovell makes this statement based on professor Jackson's article entitled, "The Genesis of the Negro Spiritual." Jackson, according to Lovell, "began tying together why in

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[23]Johnson, *The Negro Spiritual*, 158.

[24]Henry Edward Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folk Songs a Study in Racial and National Music* (New York, NY: G. Schirmer, 1914), 14.

[25]Johnson, *The Negro Spiritual,* 161.

[26]John Lovell, *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1972), 96.

Negro spirituals as a body of Meeting songs; from this coordination he evolved his theory of the borrowing of Negro from white... He merely makes the obvious assumption of a white supremacist that if two songs appeared simultaneously, one white and one Black, the white inevitably led and the Black inevitably followed.[27] "Lovell then states:

> The Black spiritual is a folk song; the white spiritual is not. The Afro-American slave belonged to a continuous folk tradition, stretching from the far past and still in existence in the present day: for example, the funeral singing celebrating the death of Martin Luther King... Thus, the creators of the white spiritual are a folk group only in a very lucid, unrestricted sense. The creators of the Black spiritual were a folk group in every essential essence; they created folk songs accordingly. Not so with the creators of the white spiritual."[28]

Lovell further posits:

> Professor Johnson offers assumptions and parallels as evidence; like them, he proves no direct borrowings; like them, he fails to show how the Negro singer could have created so many hundreds of original songs on a very limited experience in the uninspiring white spirituals. He quotes lines from the white spiritual songbook, millennial harp, with such fervor as to suggest that the slaves rated avidly and copied their own spirituals from it with trembling hands. He affirms that when the Negro spiritual spoke of freedom, it meant freedom from sin; thus in 'Go down, Moses,' the Pharaoh who was ordered to free the people was a symbol of sin and the Israelite oppression was of a destructive or moral slavery."[29]

Lovell leans on Lindsay Patterson, the editor of *The Negro in Music and Art*, written in 1966, who reprints the memorable essay of W. E. B. Dubois, and says that he perpetuated the debate over the question of the predominance of misery and sorrow in the songs. Lovell says that DuBois "rightfully stresses the sheer beauty of the spirituals, the

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[27]Ibid., 94.

[28]Ibid., 96-97.

[29]Ibid., 99.

ancient origins, and the message. He brings out the hope, which shines through the sorrow. The slaves, he says, in an exquisite manner, were 'singing to the sunshine.'"[30] Lovell also points out the negative side of the debate in Zora Neale Hurston's "Spirituals and Neo-Spirituals," written in 1933. Hurston says, "The idea that the whole body of spirituals are sorrow songs is ridiculous. They cover a wide range of subjects from a peeve and gossip to death and judgment."[31] In Alain Locke's work, *The New Negro*, he also leans on the work of W. E. B. Dubois. He states:

> The humble origin of the sorrow songs is too indelibly stamped upon them to be ignored or overlooked. The bunnies' broken words, childish imagery, peasant simplicity, lies, as Dr. Du Bois pointed out, an epic intensity and the tragic profundity of emotional experience, for which the only historical analogy is a spiritual experience of the Jews the only analogue, is the Psalms. Indeed they transcend emotionally even the experience of sorrow out of which they were born; their mood is that of religious exaltation, a degree of ecstasy indeed that makes them in spite of the crude vehicle the classic expression of the religious emotion."[32]

Cheryl Kirk-Duggan's work, *Exorcizing Evil: A Womanist Perspective on the Spirituals*, deals with anthropology but from a ethnomusicology standpoint. "Ethnomusicology, the study of living music and musical cultures and histories, past or present, analyzes the shared cultural meanings of musical sounds, views musical practices in their widest manner, addresses oral tradition at first, and then tries to locate music in its social and cultural context. This discipline pays attention to a culture's thinking, activity, and systems; notes the mutual influences of one on another; and compares groups within a culture and with several groups that are similar or different

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[30]Lovell, *Black Song*, 195.

[31]Ibid., 195.

[32]Alain Locke, *The New Negro* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 200-201.

from a cultural and technical standpoint,"[33] as referenced by Kirk Duggan, according to Marsha Herndon and Norma McLeod. Kirk-Duggan states, "Ethnomusicology asks anthropological questions that historical musicology does not ask... If music style is the result of patterned behavior, how does one determine which elements to include and exclude and which disciplines are integral or marginal? What are the goals written transcriptions, and how can one grasp the participants' attitude to the styles and use of music?[34]"

Conclusion

James Cone posits in his work *the Spirituals and the Blues:*

> The Black slaves' response to the experience of suffering corresponded closely to the biblical message and its emphasis that God is the ultimate answer to the question of faith. In the spirituals, the Black slaves' experience of suffering and despair defined for them the major issue in their view of the world. They did not really question the justice and the goodness of God. It was taken for granted that God was righteous and will vindicate the poor and the weak. Indeed it was the point of departure for faith."[35]

Cone further states, "The singers of spirituals had another concern, centered on the faithfulness of the community of believers in a world full of trouble. They wondered not whether God is just and right but whether the sadness and pain of the world would cause them to lose faith in the gospel of God."[36] Wyatt Tee Walker says, "The Bible was the

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[33]Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, *Exorcizing Evil: A Womanist Perspective on the Spirituals* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 99.

[34]Ibid., 99.

[35]Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues, 57.*

[36]Ibid., 57.

source material of the antebellum slaves to create the musical literature of their faith."[37] Melva Costen states, "In an effort to find freedom and understanding, traditional beliefs and practices, Christian beliefs and practices, and the reality of existence emerged. As a result, a unique African American Christian faith was shaped. The biblical message of salvation assured deliverance from oppression and hope for the future."[38] W. E. B Dubois deals with the spirituals from the point of sorrow, yet lets us know that in them, there is hope.

During my journey from childhood to adulthood, I lost hope in people. I could not understand how people could be so inhumane. The external force from the actions of others showed the researcher the nature of some people. I always asked, "Why did this happen to me?" This question loomed in my mind and went unanswered for many years. Then I stumbled upon a song entitled "Soon Ah Will Be Done," and this song gave me hope. This song allowed me to see that his troubles were only temporary and change was bound to take place. My hope was restored, and I was able to see that not everyone acted in inhumane ways.

I felt like a slave in my own life, unable to make decisions for himself because of the strong will of his superiors. When my hope was restored, my body was still in bondage, but my mind was free. I learned to pray and seek God during the tough times in life. The words of the song that changed my outlook allowed me to see that change would eventually take place. The hope gained in the midst of my reality allowed me to endure.

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[37]Wyatt Tee. Walker, *The Soul of Black Worship: A Trilogy—Preaching, Praying, Singing* (New York: Martin Luther King Fellows Press, 1984), 56.

[38]Melva Wilson Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993), 26.

In the book of Jeremiah, those who were exiled had to assimilate into their captors' culture. The letter written to the exiles explained how they were to live. In order to survive, they had to follow the instructions of Jeremiah. The exiles had to build houses, plant food and marry. Jeremiah told them that the Lord would rescue them when their seventy years of exile were completed. The exiles had to accept their reality but were eventually delivered by the Lord. Similarly, I had to accept my reality but was eventually delivered by the Lord. In the letter written to the Thessalonians, Paul used pastoral care and sent Timothy to encourage the people. In my context, it was said that I was appointed to restore hope. I had not recognized this until the members of the context were thankful that I stayed in a less-than-hopeful situation. I was able to show those in the context that it was okay to have hope when all hope seemed lost.

Graham Johnston writes that the message of hope comes from God. I found hope after listening to a spiritual and learning about the situation out of which the spiritual was birthed. I recognized the importance of having hope and how hope has the ability to sustain. Johnston states, "The strength of hope in the 21st century lies firstly in the insurance beyond the grave… The hope of Christ beyond the grave rests at the heart of the gospel message and should be given voice in these uncertain times."[39] Johnston further states:

> In postmodernity, the focus is on truth in living out the hope that is in us. Summon postmodern times will embrace the message of Christ, providing that the hope in Christ is seen to generate a vision and conviction to make a difference in one's life. The postmodern generation can be seen as cynical, hard, different, and jaded. In so few years, they've experienced much harm. They are like teenage runaways: the tough appearance only serves to hide their deep-seated fear, but underneath the exterior lurks a yearning for something profound, meaningful, and beautiful. Biblical preaching must hold out the word of life (Phil 2:16) both for

[39]Johnston, *The Negro Spiritual,* 138.

> this life and one to come, and for broken people whose faith, hope, and love have become rare commodities."[40]

Clergy must be able to offer hope through the message of Christ to this postmodern generation. Clergy can also lean on the messages of the spirituals to foster hope. The slaves were able to look toward a future reality while having to accept their present reality. The same way hope was fostered through the messages of various spirituals during slavery times, hope can be fostered today through the messages of the spirituals.

[40]Ibid., 142.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The information that will be given in this section will take a look into the history of Methodism and the institution of the itinerancy system. The institution of the itinerancy system, the importance of pastoral care, and the message of the spirituals are all important to the scope of this project. The itinerancy system is used currently in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and the United Methodist Church (UMC). These denominations have had the system of itinerancy for many years. The AME church used the itinerancy model in the establishment of their organizations. The purpose of this perspective is to look at the history of the Methodist Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, why the itinerancy system was instituted, the use of pastoral care, and how the messages of various spirituals can strengthen pastoral care.

History of the Methodist Church

John Wesley is the founder of the Methodist Church. The term Methodist came from a name John and his brother were called when they attended college. According to Luccock and Hutchinson, the following was said about the Methodists during that time.

> By rule they eat, by rule they drink, Do all things else by rule, but think
> Accuse their priests of loose behavior, To get more in the laymen's favor;
> Method alone must guide 'em all, Whence Methodists themselves they call.[1]

[1]Halford Edward Luccock and Paul Hutchinson, *The Story of Methodism* (New York, NY: Methodist Book of Concern, 1926), 58.

This discouraged Wesley, but Luccock and Hutchinson go further and state, "For a time, the Wesley brothers seem to have been disturbed by the outburst of opposition that greeted their efforts to live as they thought Christian students should live. But John came at last to see that the real root of trouble lay in the fact they were daring to be different from those about them, and an issue of that kind never worried him. And from the old rector at Epworth there came words of good cheer that strengthened their determination to go ahead in the acts of philanthropy and personal devotion that had caused the storm."[2]

Early in the evening of May 24, 1738, a small group of people gathered in a secluded room on Aldersgate Street, London to conduct a prayer meeting. These people were members of the Church of England who had failed to find in the stately services of that church all that they sought in the way of spiritual help. Therefore, they gathered week after week to seek additional strength in an informal meeting of this kind.[3] During this prayer meeting something happened to John Wesley. The author states that John Wesley said, "While he [Luther] was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."[4] He goes on further and says, "I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first feel in my heart."[5] The author states Wesley did two things immediately following his

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[2]Ibid.,58.

[3]Ibid.,65.

[4]Ibid., 67.

[5]Ibid.

transformation at the prayer meeting. The first was a trip to his old university, Oxford, always the center of his affection. There he preached on "By grace are ye saved through faith." It was an echo of the words from Luther, which had been effective in his own case but did not fit the mood of the proud university.[6] John Wesley not only had his brother Charles to aid him in the movement of Methodism, there was another who aided in the forward movement. George Whitfield, when he preached, could be heard a mile away, and when he sang, his voice carried two miles.[7] Whitfield preached to two hundred miners from Kingswood, a mining district just outside of Bristol.[8] The writer says Whitfield's first open air congregation numbered two hundred; his second was just ten times as large. It was not long before he was preaching to twenty thousand people. The miners came straight from the pit to listen, there is no picture in all the annals of that early Methodism easier to imagine than that of the white furrows that appeared on their blackened cheeks as they listened spellbound, and the tears came coursing down.[9]

In 1736, the Wesley's arrived on American soil. John Wesley first encountered the Indians. This did not go well for John and Charles. Frank Baker posits, "...the Indians were not receptive to the new ideas as Wesley had believed, though he was impressed by the Chicksaws and planned to learn their language.[10] Baker also says, "Wesley sent to the prestigious Gentlemen's Magazine an account of an interview with five Chickasaws on

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[6]Ibid.,72.

[7]Ibid., 76.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., 76-77.

[10]Frank Baker, *From Wesley to Asbury: Studies in Early American Methodism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1976), 8.

July 20, 1736, in which he faithfully recorded their religious views. This was printed with an introduction pointing out what a deep and habitual sense of a divine providence is imprinted on the minds of those ignorant heathens and how excellently they are prepared to receive the gospel.[11] However, by the time this was published, Wesley had become frustrated and disillusioned about the Indians in general.[12] The Wesley's work among the whites seemed at first more promising.[13] According to Baker, these were the words of Wesley when it came to Methodism:

> It is said, 'the first rise of Methodism, so called was in November 1729, when four of us met together at Oxford; the second was at Savannah, in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house; the last was at London, on May 1, 1738, when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday, in order to a free conversation, begun and ended with singing and prayer.[14]

Baker says that Wesley clearly introduced Methodism as a movement and even as an embryo society to America, and indeed some features of the experiment seem to hold priority over Great Britain.[15] The focal point of the term Methodist in its general sense and to some extent at least in its specific sense, both in England and in America, was George Whitfield. He was Wesley's pupil, and member of the Holy Club, summoned by Wesley to help him in Georgia.[16]

Baker goes on to say that, in large measure, Baker succeeded in accomplishing in America what Wesley returned to accomplish in Britain. The fire of the Great Awakening

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[11]Ibid., 8.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., 9.

[14]Ibid., 19-20.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., 24.

and of the Georgia awakening was continually dying down for want of fuel, but it was rekindled and spread by Whitfield. He not only helped America to maintain the spiritual glow, he also exercised a constantly mellowing effect on the tendencies towards harsh puritanism and dry orthodoxy among the evangelical dissenters on the one hand, and on the religious formalism, and political Toryism of the Anglican ministers on the other.[17] Baker continues in the explanation of American Methodism saying, "By the 1760's the desire for evangelical preachers could be heard on every side and Whitfield was probably the first to ask Wesley to send men over to help. In 1764, he wrote from Philadelphia: "Here is room for a hundred itinerants. Lord Jesus send by whom thou wilt send." In answer to such pleas Wesley replied that he could spare any itinerants, but that some of the local preachers were equal both in grace and gifts to most of the itinerants, recommending Whitfield; one man in particular."[18] Baker says there were already some locals and leaders who had traveled to America for personal reasons. It was during the 1760's these men were encouraged to make ventures in holding fellowship groups and preaching in a small way, particularly Robert Strawbridge in Maryland and Philip Embury in New York. Their efforts were coordinated and new evangelism was began by the most mobile of all local preachers, Captain Thomas Webb.[19] Bakers goes on further and says that letters from these and others, especially Thomas Taylor, made it clear to Wesley that he must send out itinerants and take some responsibility for organizing societies. The first two itinerants came out in 1769, and Wesley asked Whitfield to keep a

[17]Ibid.

[18]Baker, *From Wesley to Asbury*, 26.

[19]Ibid., 26.

fatherly eye on them. American Methodism, in its society phase, after a lengthy gestation and prolonged and complicated labors, had a last been born.[20]

Local and Itinerant Ministry

> A local preacher in the Methodist movement, during Wesley's time, was defined as men, exercising a spare time ministry in the area where they lived and worked. From their ranks emerged the specialists, the itinerant preachers-still laymen-who under Wesley's direction served various circuits, itinerating week by week within the circuits, and traveling year by year from one circuit to another all the time supported by the Methodist people. A local preacher whose livelihood (or lack of it) took him to another area or country frequently gathered around himself a group of sympathizers and converts who met regularly for Christian fellowship-a Methodist society. This society the local preacher tried to oversee a best he could, but usually came to realize that this task demanded different talents and much more time than that of evangelical preaching. He thereupon appealed to Wesley or to one of his itinerant preachers to supply leadership, organization, and discipline necessary to keep alive the spiritual glow.[21]

It should be noted that between 1769 and 1774, Wesley sent over eight of his itinerants in matched pairs, with one each time as the recognized leader. All were young men in their early thirties except for the two chosen in 1771, Francis Asbury and Richard Wright. Asbury was only twenty-six and Wright apparently younger still.[22] Baker says one important element in American Methodist progress during the 1770's was the struggle for power between the pioneer local preachers dispatched with delegated authority to guide the fortunes of the new societies.[23] He further states it was impossible to secure adequate information about many of the preachers, not even the date and place of their birth, or whether they were immigrants or American-born. Between 1773 and 1778, however, the

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[20]Ibid., 26.

[21]Ibid., 84-85.

[22]Ibid., 85.

[23]Ibid.

American Minutes record the names of over sixty men, quite apart from the British itinerants. Of these, only twenty-eight remained in 1778, including ten admitted on trial that very year.[24]

Francis Asbury was also very important in American Methodism. Asbury believed that is was important that those whom God called to preach the gospel and shepherd his people should be carefully trained, and that by a constant itinerancy it was essential they should be kept alive to the varying needs of the people from whom they had sprung.[25] Asbury also believed that in order to ensure an efficient itinerancy it was essential that the preachers be tightly ordered and firmly disciplined, though the specific rules and administrative practices to which they must respond and which they in turn would enforce should be flexible enough for variation in face of constantly changing circumstances.[26]

Bernard Semmels states, "The system of itinerancy was hoped might insure that the doctrine offered to Methodists would be relatively free of the eccentricities of a particular preacher, and that the control of Methodist polity would repose at the center. (Brief itinerancies, and an insufficient number of full-time preachers, also had the opposite effect, of course, of enhancing the authority of local preachers, at the lower level than the itinerants, and of the stewards and the trustees.)"[27] He goes on to say, "The

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[24]Ibid., 97.

[25]Ibid., 122.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1973), 115.

itinerant system.... is the heart of Methodism's perpetual evangelism, preventing preachers from slipping into settled ways, and keeping the missionizing fervor keen."[28]

In the book entitled, *The Works of John Wesley Volume 9*, Wesley gives a deeper look into the itinerant system and what is known as the circuit system. Wesley was one man and could not get to everyone's church. He already had a class leader in place where one person would be a leader over a group of people within one of the Methodist societies.

The first Methodist society was established in Bristol on July 11, 1739 and this is where Wesley instituted the class leader system. The classes served as groups within the church where persons would be visited at their homes have spiritual fellowship and the persons in the class would have access to someone if they were unable to attend church. Wesley eventually put what was known as stewards over the leaders of the classes. The stewards were chosen by Wesley and used for many purposes in the society. The stewards were the ones who collected any monies that were collected in classes to help with the upkeep of the society. The growth of the Methodist church caused Wesley to see that he could not be everywhere at the same time. There was what was known as assistants that were assigned to a circuit. These persons were assistants to Wesley himself.

The circuit was the area throughout which the assistant was commanded to travel, and the Conference of 1789 carefully laid out the duties of the assistant in each place in his circuit. He was to visit and regulate the bands and classes, deliver the class tickets, hold quarterly meetings of all the societies, care and watch over the helpers, supply books

[28]Ibid., 117.

and keep careful accounts of financial transactions.[29] The assistants were itinerant preachers, but the helpers were itinerant as well. It was from their number that the assistants were selected.[30] There was normally and perhaps invariably only one assistant in each circuit; and if any assistant for any reason moved to a circuit where there was one already, he reverted to the status, or more accurately the functions of a helper. The helpers were in fact the rank and files of itinerant preachers.[31] This way, the message of Wesley would be able to reach each of the Methodist societies with Wesley having to physically be there. According to Dennis Campbell, itinerants were "persons gifted in the Spirit to preach spiritual Christianity; Wesley's sons in the gospel; chosen by, directed by, accountable to him; under appointment sent to a circuit to travel that circuit; bound together with other such helpers into the connection and in recognition of Wesley's superintendence over them and the people called Methodist."[32]

Albert Outler posits in his work, *The Works of John Wesley*, "Itinerants were explicitly no ordinary ministers—that is, not appointed to administer sacraments, not ordained to the priestly office, not parish bound."[33] According to Russell Richey, "Itinerancy was, then, defined by its relation to Wesley (the appointive power), through its purposes and over against parish ministry, ostensibly within the Church of England. It

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[29]John Wesley and Rupert Eric Davies, *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 16.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., 17.

[32]Dennis M. Campbell, *The Yoke of Obedience: The Meaning of Ordination in Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988), 48.

[33]Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley: Sermons IV* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987), 79-80.

was extraordinary."[34] However, according to Richey in 1784, itinerancy changed in essence, though not initially in manifestation. As an Episcopal church, American Methodism now offered the ordinary ministrations—most notably the sacraments—but also those offices and functions that fall to presbyters and for which Methodists had previously resorted to parish church.[35] Another individual, named Richard Allen, adapted to the ways of the Methodist Church.

History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The denomination was formed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania officially in 1816. Howard D. Gregg posits in his work, *History of the AME Church,* "The African Methodist Episcopal Church is an offspring of the Methodist Church which was founded by John Wesley in England and America in the eighteenth century. As American history has its antecedents in European history, so the African Methodist Episcopal Church has its background in the Methodist Church. Richard Allen, the founder of the AME church, was a dyed in the wool Methodist ordained by the Rt. Reverend Francis Asbury, a Methodist Bishop."[36]

Richard was born a slave on February 14, 1760. The name of his owner was Benjamin Chew of Philadelphia. According to Gregg, the following information was taken from the autobiography of Richard Allen in regards to his conversion:

> ...shortly after, I obtained mercy through the blood of Christ, and was constrained to exhort my old companions to seek the Lord. I went and was happy in the Lord in conversing with many old, experienced Christians. I was brought under doubts,

[34]Donald E. Messer, *Send Me?: The Itineracy in Crisis* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 28.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Howard D. Gregg, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church: The Black Church in Action* (Nashville, TN: AMEC, 1980), 11.

> and was tempted to believe I was deceived, and was constrained to seek the Lord afresh. I went with my head bowed down for many days. My sins were a heavy burden. I was tempted to believe there was no mercy for me. One night I thought hell would be my portion. I cried to the Lord both night and day. I cried unto Him who delighteth to hear the prayers of a poor sinner, and all of a sudden my dungeon shook, my chains flew off, and, glory to God, I cried. My soul was filled. I cried, enough for me – the Savior died. Now my confidence was strengthened that the Lord, for Christ's sake, had heard my prayers and pardoned my sins. I was constrained to go from house to house, exhorting my old companions, and telling to all around what a dear Savior I had found. I joined the Methodist society and met in class at Benjamin Wells', in the forest, Delaware state. John Gray was the class leader. I met in his class for several years.[37]

Richard Allen eventually bought his freedom for the sum of $2,000. According to Gregg, Richard Allen left Delaware and headed to New Jersey.[38] Allen continued to preach as he traveled and ended up in Philadelphia. He, as well as others, attended St. George's in Philadelphia. Allen states in his autobiography:

> Meeting had begun, and they were nearly done singing, and just as we got to the seats, the elder said, 'Let us pray.' We had not been long upon our knees before I heard considerable scuffling and low- talking. I raised my head up and saw one of the trustees, H-M, having hold of the Reverend Absalom Jones, pulling him up off of his knees and said, 'You must get up – you must not kneel here.' Mr. Jones replied, 'Wait until prayer is over.' Mr. H-M said, 'No, you must get up now, or I will call for aid and force you away.' Mr. Jones said, 'Wait until prayer is over, and I will get up and trouble you no more.' With that he beckoned to one of the other trustees, Mr. L-S- to come to his assistance. He came and went to William White to pull him up. By the time prayer was over, we all went out of the church in one body, and they were not more plagued with us in the church.[39]

This pushed those who walked out of St. George's to hold worship themselves. This, according to Allen, was the first African church erected in America. In pushing forward through much opposition from the Methodist Church, a vote took place on whether the African Church would be part of the Methodist Church of the Church of England. Allen

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[37]Ibid., 472-473.

[38]Ibid., 474.

[39]Ibid., 478.

states, "Notwithstanding we had been so violently persecuted by the elder, we were in favor of begin attached to the Methodist connection; for I was confident that there was not religious sect or denomination would suit the capacity of the colored people as well as the Methodist; for the plain and simple gospel suits best for any people, for the unlearned and understand, and the learned are sure to understand; and the reason that the Methodist is so successful in the awakening and conversion of the colored people, the plain doctrine and having a good discipline.[40] Allen goes on to tell how it was in 1793 that a committee from the African Church solicited him to be their minister. Years passed, more opposition was faced, but in April 1816, according to Allen:

> Delegates from Baltimore and other places which met those of Philadelphia, and taking into consideration their grievances, and in order to secure privileges, promote union and harmony among themselves, it was resolved: 'That the people of Philadelphia, Baltimore, & etc,. & etc., should become one body, under the name of the African Methodist Episcopal.' We deemed it expedient to have a form of discipline, whereby we may guide our people in the fear of God, in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bonds of peace and preserve us from that spiritual despotism which we have so recently experienced—remembering that we are not to lord it over God's heritage, as greedy dogs that can never have enough. But with long suffering and bowels of compassion, to bear each other's burdens, and so to fulfill the Law of Christ, praying that our mutual striving together for the promulgation of the Gospel may be crowned with abundant success.[41]

Wesley and Allen both exhibited a form of pastoral care. Each person found the Lord and began to incorporate others into their experiences. It was imperative that others were included in their quests. Wesley and Allen were both met with opposition, yet were able to overcome the obstacles. However, there was another group of people that had to endure hardships, opposition, and obstacles. These persons did not create a religious

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[40]Ibid., 479.

[41]Ibid., 482-483.

movement or a denomination. They used music to describe their everyday experiences, which produced hope, not only in themselves but in others as well.

Spirituals

"'About the last of August came a Dutch man-ware that sold us twenty Negars.'" This statement, dated 1619, in the *Generall Historie of Virginia* by Captain John Smith, refers to the first arrival of Black men in the English colonies on the mainland (i.e., the eastern seaboard of the present United States)."[42] Eileen Southern says, "The Africans came, for the most part, from the west coast of Africa—from the area now occupied by the lands of Senegal, Guinea, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, and parts of the Congo and Zaire."[43] Olaudah Equiano was one of the first Africans to write a book in the English language,[44] and he described the area from which the slaves were taken in his autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gusta Vassa the African:*

> That part of Africa, known by the name of Guinea, to which the trade for slaves is carried on, extends along the coast about 3400 miles, from Senegal to Angola in includes a variety of kingdoms.[45]

Africans were taken from their homelands, but prior to being taken there were some Blacks that were in fact indentured servants. Eileen Southern says, "By 1644, Governor Kieft of New Amsterdam had released from bondage the eleven men of Angola and their

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[42]A. G. Bradley, ed., *Travels and Works of Captain Smith* (Edinburgh, UK: Oliver and Boyd, 1910), 541.

[43]Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton Company 1971), 3.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (London, UK: Self Published, 1789).

wives for long and faithful service. There are records that show that Black indentured servants in Virginia began to secure their freedom in the 1650's, having served out their time."[46] Southern also stated that it was during the second half of the seventeenth century when the importation of Africans into the colonies increased. More and more Black captives were given contracts that made them servants for life instead of servants for a time." Eventually, they received no indentures at all;[47] slavery at this time had now been established.

Southern begins to explain what the Africans were not able to retain when stripped from their homeland as well as things that could be taken from them:

> Africans were taken to the New World in chains, stripped to the bare skin, and those that came to the mainland colonies generally were separated from their families and communities. But though they could not bring material objects with them, they retained memories of the rich culture traditions they had left behind in the motherland and passed these traditions to their children. The importance given to music and dance in Africa was reflected among black men in the colonies, as will be seen, in the songs they sang, in their dancing and folk festivals. The function of music as a communal, for example, led to the development of slave-song repertories that provided some measure of release from the physical and spiritual brutality of slavery.[48]

John Blassingame notes the emotional and psychological hardiness of these uprooted Africans as evidenced by their tenacious hold, through memory alone, on the cultural determinants of their own status.[49] John Lovell Jr., in his book of essays entitled, *The Social Implications of the Negro Spirituals*, tells of not only the physical resistance, but the mental resistance as well: "Uprising slaves were shot or hanged and that was the end

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[46]Southern, *The Music of Black Americans,* 5, 6.

[47]Robert Beverley, *The History of Virginia in Four Parts* (London, UK: R. Parker at the Unicorn 1722), 235.

[48]Southern, *The Music of Black Americans,* 23.

[49]Wyatt Tee Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 28.

of them physically; but the mind of the slave seethed ceaselessly, and was a powerful factor..."[50]

The slaves were able to retain the memories of their homeland and develop their experiences in slavery into songs. Walker states, "Because of the stringent codes which buttressed the slaves system, musical expression developed as the chief means of covert communication among the slaves."[51] Wyatt Tee Walker points out, "The spirituals were created and refined by the slaves themselves as religious or social statements about the context of their lives. The broad use of the spiritual was increased through Blacks evangelizing one another."[52] The spirituals are the heart music of all other American music. They are the taproot of the musical expression of the Black religious experience.[53] Walker also states, "In spite of specious laws and the infamous Black Codes that were so restrictive to the sociality of slaves, some sense of family and community evolved."[54] James Weldon Johnson caught the terror of the day in the second stanza of the Negro National Anthem: "Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, felt in the days when hope unborn had died…."[55] Walker finishes one of his thoughts by saying:

> There remained an instrumentality that slavery could not destroy-the oral tradition of the slaves' African heritage. And where better to ply that became the medium of all the yearning for peace and freedom. That which slaves dared not breathe in

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[50]John Lovell Jr., "The Social Implications of the Negro Spiritual," in *The Social Implications of Early Negro Music in the United States* edited by Bernard Katz (New York, NY: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 131.

[51]Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name,* 37.

[52]Ibid., 40.

[53]Ibid., 43.

[54]John Rublowsky, *Black Music in America* (New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1971), 58-60.

[55]Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name,* 44.

> public word, they disguised in song and thereby kept a vital part of their humanity intact and their hope alive.[56]

Spirituals in the AME Church

Vivienne Anderson, writer of the preface of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal* writes, "The African Methodist Episcopal Church produced its first hymnal in 1818. The first collection of hymns and spirituals was collected by Richard Allen and used by the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1801. The collections of hymns by Richard Allen contained 312 hymns and spirituals carefully chosen to enhance the church in doctrine and spiritual food."[57] Eileen Southern states, "The hymnal provides an index to the hymns popular among Black congregations."[58] She goes on to say the hymns represented the Black worshipers' own choices, not the choices of white missionaries and ministers.

The church was a place where Blacks were free to be themselves. They were free to express themselves. The music they sang did not have to have a coded message or express the conditions of the day. In the Episcopal Address of 1876 was a statement in regards to the singing of hymns and spiritual songs in the AME Church:

> …But, beloved, forget not that hymns, spiritual songs—lyrics of the most elevated poetry, breathing the noblest sentiments—avail us nothing, unless we sing with the spirit and the understanding; therefore, in the language of the Apostle, we exhort you to be fill with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms

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[56]Ibid., 45.

[57]*The African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: AME Church, 2006), ix.

[58]Southern *The Music of Black Americans: A History* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton Company 1971), 75.

and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord…[59]

One of the things noticed was that there were no spirituals listed in Richard Allen's hymnbook. This may be due to the introduction of choirs and choral music in 1889. According to Bishop Daniel A. Payne, "With the introduction of the organ in 1864, it seemed this occurred without opposition, though later considerable opposition was made by one of the pastors to its continuance, but it was unavailing. It was generally true that the opposition came from those who cared only for those, 'corn-field ditties,' which could produce the wildest excitement among the thoughtless masses. Such persons are usually so because they are non-progressive, and, being illiterate, are consequently very narrow in views of men and things. A strong religious feeling, coupled with a narrow knowledge, often makes one a bigot."[60]

Bishop Payne was not a fan of the cornfield ditties, as he has referenced in his essay, entitled *African American Christianity, Pt. II: From the Civil War to the Great Migration, 1865 to 1920.* This was a song sang during the days of the prayer bands in which Payne referred to as corn-field ditties, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; If God won't have us, the devil must. I was way over there where the coffin fell' I heard that sinner as he screamed in hell." Prayer was only a secondary thing and this was rude and extravagant to the last degree."[61] Payne believed that the AME Church needed to have an intelligent ministry to teach these people who held to this ignorant mode of worship the

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[59]*The African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville, TN: AME Church 2006), ix.

[60]Robert Beverly, Documenting the American South, accessed on April 18, 2013, http://docsouth .unc.edu/church /payne/ payne.html, 457.

[61]Laurie Maffly-Kipp, National Humanities Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, accessed April 13, 2013, http://national humanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/aarpayneexrpt.htm.

true method of serving God. Bishop Payne believed that his mission was to elevate a people from slavery. He decided that the church needed more civilized music. He disparaged the spiritual hymns and what he called cornfield ditties, which were the legacy of slavery. Often, congregations would take popular tunes from the era and sing religious words with them. To Payne, this was unacceptable. One of Payne's favorite hymns in the AME hymnal was a hymn called "Whiter than Snow," whose lyrics included the line, "Wash me from sin, wash me whiter than snow." Bishop Henry McNeal Turner considered this song to be an abomination. Bishop Turner felt it tantamount to African Americans asking God to make them white.[62] Whenever Turner heard that song being sung by congregations, he would demand that they stop. For Turner, this was one more way that African Americans had been trained to hate themselves.

It was in Bishop Turner's edition, the first hymnbook compiled after the Civil War, that spirituals or revival songs were listed. Bishop Turner explains the inclusion of the revival songs in the preface of the hymnbook:

> Under the head of 'Revivals' a large number of old 'Zion songs' have been inserted. This may elicit the disapproval of some of our poetic neologists. But they must remember we have a wide spread custom of singing on revival occasions, especially, what is commonly called Spiritual Songs, most of which are devoid of both sense and reason; and some are absolutely false and vulgar. To remedy this evil, and to obviate the necessity of recurring to this wild melodies, even to accommodate the most illiterate, these time honored and precious old songs, which have not been sung since that time 'whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary,' have been as it were resurrected and regiven to the church. Besides, I am not ashamed to say that I love good old soul-inspiring songs a thousand fold more than I do these later day operatic songs, most of the music

[62]This Far By Faith, "Daniel Payne," accessed on April 13, 2013http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/people/daniel_payne.html.

> of which is composed by persons who know nothing of God or religion, and some of whom are avowed atheist.[63]

Bishop Turner saw the benefit of the inclusion of the spirituals in his edition of the hymnbook during a time when the songs were not viewed as important but rather a hindrance to worship in the African American community. Bishop Turner felt the need to provide the AME Church with a piece of history that told of the struggle of its founders and ancestors. There were many variables that led to the creation of a religious movement, a denomination, or a mode by which groups of persons had the will and the means to survive. In the realm of pastoral care, the leader should be able to use the messages of various spirituals to strengthen his/her follower.

Old Testament

Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon;

> After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;) By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; Build ye houses, and dwell ***in them***; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that *be* in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause

[63] *The Hymnbook of the AME Church,* Sixth Edition (Philadelphia, PA: Department of the AME Church, 1878), iv.

> to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD. For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.[64]

The book of Jeremiah, according to Peter R. Ackroyd and Ralph W. Klein, is reflective of and responsive to the historical crisis of the last days of Judah, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 587 B.C.E. This crisis is the dominant and shaping event in the entire Old Testament. The destruction evoked and extensive theological literature of which the book of Jeremiah is one major component.[65] Walter Brueggemann further explains the historical context of the book of Jeremiah, which will create a part of the foundation of this perspective:

> The last days of the 7th Century, the time of Jeremiah, witnessed the abrupt collapse of the Assyrian Empire and its prompt displacement by the Babylonians under the guidance of Nebuchadnezzar. The Judean crisis must therefore be understood in the context of Babylonian imperial ambitions and expansionism. The power of Babylon to the north of Judah, however, was not the only foreign power with which Judah had to deal. Judah also had to attend to the Egyptians to the south, whose policy was to maintain Judah as a buffer against Babylonian pressure. Thus Judah was placed precisely and precariously between Babylon and Egypt. The Judahite kings in the years after Josiah (639-609) vacillated between Babylonian and Egyptian alliances.[66]

Judah during this time was not in a great place. Brueggemann further states, in reference to the historical context of Jeremiah:

> The Babylonian Empire terminated Judah's existence as an independent political entity. Jerusalem and its environs were made part of a governorship accountable to the empire. A second and even deportation of Jerusalem's citizens occurred, as

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[64]Jer 29:1–10 (KJV).

[65]See Peter R. Ackroyd, "Exile and Restoration," *Old Testament Library* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminister SCM, 1968) and Ralph W. Klein, "Israel in Exile," *Overtures to Biblical Theology 6* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1979).

[66]Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 1.

> part of a general strategy for consolidating the Babylonian Empire and maintaining power.[67]

The aforementioned ideas begin to the give a closer look into the historical context of the book of Jeremiah. Brueggemann says that, during the last century, according to Brevard S. Childs, "An approximate consensus has been reached among critical scholars that the book contains three layers of literature reflecting three layers of redactional activity: 1) the poetic utterances of the prophet Jeremiah; 2) the narrative accounts of Baruch; and 3) the theological overlay of Deuteronomic theologians."[68] Brueggemann deals with several approaches in dissecting the book of Jeremiah. The first approach deals with a more critical approach. For more insight into this perspective, he looks to William L. Halladay and John Bright. Brueggemann states, "This approach seeks to determine the date and exact historical setting of each textual unit. It asks specific historical questions of each passage.

Moreover, this approach is inclined to maximize the role of the actual person Jeremiah by assigning as much material as possible to the prophet. The work of Halladay and Bright, therefore, is inclined to accept whenever possible the claim of the book of Jeremiah itself, that the materials do indeed stem from the work of the prophet."[69] The second approach Brueggemann deals with is the dominant tendency of recent British scholarship, articulated especially by Robert P. Carroll, but also Peter R. Ackroyd and Ernest W. Nicholson:[70]

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[67]Ibid, 2.

[68]Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress; SCM, 1979), 342, 344.

[69]Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah,* 8.

[70]Ibid.

> The position focuses on the Deuteronomic editing of the book of Jeremiah in the Exile, a generation, or two after the person of Jeremiah. The canonical text of Jeremiah is understood to be the work of exilic editors and redactors who have recast and transformed the older material for the sake of the community in exile, under the influence of the tradition of Deuteronomy. This approach focuses on the constructive pastoral and theological intention of the community in exile that construed the tradition of Jeremiah in fresh directions in order to meet fresh religious needs.[71]

Brueggemann suggests in this approach that it cannot be determined if the words in the book of Jeremiah are his actual words. He further suggests, "Indeed, we have access to the person of Jeremiah or his words, except as mediated by the community, and to pose such a historical question is both futile and irrelevant."[72] In Brueggemann's third approach, he notes that Brevard S. Childs recognizes and seeks to value both the original and the Deuteronomic editor. He has taken the uncontested literary judgment that the original Jeremiah has been recast by Deuteronomists in exile and has shown how that the editorial/canonical combination of original and exilic materials articulates the theological claim of God's judgment against recalcitrant Jerusalem and God's promissory act of newness.[73] Brueggemann says there is no scholarly consensus about the three aforementioned approaches.

This biblical foundation focuses on chapter 29. Verses 1-10 deals with a letter sent to those in exile. Jeremiah is practicing pastoral care at this time. According to Brueggemann, the pastoral care that is expressed is expressed around two convictions: 1) there must be a realistic and intentional embrace of the exile as a place where Jews must

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[71]Ibid., 9.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Ibid., 10.

now be and where God has summoned them to obedience and 2) there is a long-term hope for return and restoration that can be affirmed and accepted. [74]He further states:

> Both affirmations are important for the exiles and for the shape of the Jeremiah tradition. The first, which enacts tearing down and plucking up, offers an alternative against romantic escapism and abdication. The second, which enacts building and planting, speaks against ultimate despair. The two themes together correspond to the governing verbs of 1:10 and reflect the basic structure of the completed message of the Jeremiah tradition.[75]

Brueggemann references another one of his works and states, "The suffering of the exile is for the Old Testament the matrix in which the hope of God is most powerfully and characteristically at work."[76] Jeremiah 29:1-3 is a precursor to the letter itself, which actually begins at verse 4. Here in the first three verses, the writer first makes it known that this letter is addressed to the remainder of the elders that are still in exile.

Brueggemann says, "The letter was carried by royal messengers and their names are given in verse 3." The letter itself begins at verse 4, and according to Brueggemann, verse 5 is the key pastoral advice of the message.[77] Jeremiah 29:5 says, "Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them."[78] According to Brueggemann:

> Judah is to build and plant, to marry and to have their children marry. That is, Judah is to prepare for a long haul, because exile will extend beyond present generation. Even in exile, Judah is to multiply just as the old enslaved community

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[74]Ibid., 255.

[75]Ibid., 256.

[76]Walter Bruegamann, *Hopeful Imagination: Prophet Voices in Exile* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1986).

[77]Bruegamann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah,* 257.

[78]Thomas Nelson, *King James Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1988).

> of Exodus 1 multiplied. Even in displacement, Judah continues to be the people over which God's promise for the future presides with power.[79]

In the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, it is posited, "Instead of hoping for Babylon's quick demise they were encouraged to seek its peace and prosperity. Jeremiah even told them to pray… for Babylon! Those prophets and diviners (cf. 27:9) who were predicting a soon return to Judah were prophesying lies. They were not sent by God."[80] Another commentary explains verse 5-7 this way:

> Take wives reflects the marriage custom of the day. In TEV Take wives and have sons and daughters is expressed simply as 'Marry and have children.' Take wives for your sons… bear sons and daughters appears in GECL as 'Give your sons and daughters in marriage, so that they may also have children!' For some translators these solutions of GECL and TEV may cause problems because they seem to obscure the Jewish culture in which marriage was seen as a male action. However, in this verse Jeremiah is not discussing how marriage took place, only telling people that it should take place, that they should go ahead and lead normal lives. So translators can use the normal expressions from their language for marriage, as GECL and TEV have done.[81]

This suggests the exiles are to look at their captivity and settle in Babylon. Jeremiah goes further into the well-being of the exiles and tells them in verse 7, "And seek the peace of the city wither I have carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace therof shall ye have peace. This is where the letter shifts. Brueggamann says:

> Jews in exile are to work for the well-being (shalom) of the empire and its capital city. The well-being (shalom) of Judah is dependent upon and derivative from that of Babylon. This positive attention toward Babylon is very different from the resentment toward the imperial masters generally and Babylon particularly as expressed in the Jeremiah tradition... Prophetic faith is powerfully realistic about

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[79]Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah,* 257.

[80]J. F. Walvoord, R. B Zuck, & Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures,* vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1166.

[81]B. M. Newman, Jr., & P. C. Stine, *A Handbook on Jeremiah* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 2003), 589.

> the political situation of the Jews in exile. The Jews have no option to Babylon, which is God's chosen habitat for the exiles.[82]

The Jews in verses 5 and 6 are told to live in the community and not live as if they are captive. Jeremiah urges the development of community in the place they are held captive. Then in verse 7, they are also told to be accommodating to the Babylonians. According to the *Pulpit Commentary: Jeremiah (*vol. 1*)*, to seek the peace of the city means to interest yourselves in the peace or welfare of the city, whether Babylon or any other place where ye may be in exile, and pray for its welfare, for your own well being is inseparable from it.[83] Spence is suggesting that the very existence of the Jews depends on them seeking the peace of the city. Brueggemann states, "There is, however, more than realism in this assertion. The imperative bestows upon this vulnerable, small community a large missional responsibility. In this way, the community is invited into the larger public process of the empire. Such a horizon prevents the exilic community from withdrawing into its safe, sectarian existence, and gives it work to do and responsibility for the larger community.

In verses 8 and 9, Jeremiah references chapter 27:9, "Therefore, hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon." In the letter addressed to the remainder of the Jews in exile, they are warned again about the false prophets of Babylon. Brueggemann says:

> The concern of the text is not a theoretical one about the nature of prophecy. The concern is quite a practical one, concerning the seduction of religious fantasy. The

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[82]Brueggmann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah*, 257.

[83]H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Jeremiah* vol. 1 (The Pulpit Commentary (New York, NY: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 587.

> threat to the Jews is that they will be talked out of the reality of exile, invited to deny the real place of exile where they must live out their faith... Prophetic faith is hard-nosed realism that is resistant to romantic, ideological escapism. No pretense based in religious fantasy can extricate God's people from their actual place in history. Those who permit religion to abrogate historical-political reality speak a lie.[84]

Jeremiah shows pastoral care to the Jews in Babylon. The letter sent to them does not teach them to give into despair but actually shows them they must become a part of the society. Jeremiah tells them their livelihood depends on how they treat the time they will have to spend in exile.

New Testament

> Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labor be in vain. But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you: Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: [8] For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?[85]

According to an unknown author, Thessalonica is now called Salonica. Situated on the great northern military highway from Italy to the east (known as the Egnation Way), the city was a strategic commercial and military center in Paul's day.[86] Thessalonica was built close to the site of the ancient town of Therma or Therme, so named from the hot

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[84]Brueggamann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah*, 258.

[85]1 Thes 3:1–10 (KJV).

[86]Frank Charles, Thompson, *Thompson Chain-Reference Bible, The: New International Version.* (Indianapolis, IN: 1982), 1697.

mineral springs, which still exist in the vicinity, and at the head of the Gulf called the Thermaic Gulf. Accounts differ as to the origin of the new city, but, according to the most probable story, it was founded by Cassander, the son-in-law of Philip of Macedon, about the year 315 B.C. and was called by him Thessalonica in honor of his wife, the step-sister of Alexander the Great.[87] Under Roman rule, the prosperity of the city continued to advance rapidly. Its situation on the great *Via Egnatia*, about midway between Dyrrachium on the Adriatic and the river Hebrus in Thrace, brought it into such direct contact with the stream of traffic that was continually passing along that busy highway between Rome and her Eastern dependencies, that Cicero can speak of its inhabitants as placed in the lap of the Empire; and it was here that he himself sought refuge in the quaestor's house during his exile.[88] According to Warren Woolsey, First Thessalonians has most often been used from the pulpit for teaching on the second coming of Christ or on sanctification, but these letters also have much to teach us about the life and work of God's church. As relatively new Christians, the Thessalonians had much to learn, but even at that stage, Paul described them as a model church.[89]

In the above passage of scripture, prevented from returning to Thessalonica himself, Paul sends a trusted colleague to bolster the Thessalonians' courage in the midst of continuing opposition. So (1 Thes 3:1) picks up the thought of 2:17–20, and "we could stand it no longer" (echoed in 3:5) expresses the intensity of Paul's concern for the Thessalonian converts. It was this concern, which induced him to send Timothy, even

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[87]G. Milligan, ed., *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians*: *1908 Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament* (London, UK: Macmillan and Co., ltd., 1908), xix–xxi.

[88]Ibid., xxii.

[89]W. Woolsey, *1 & 2 Thessalonians: A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 1997).

though it would deprive Paul of Timothy's help in Athens.[90] When Paul and his friends left Thessalonica, they went to Berea and ministered the Word. But the troublemakers from Thessalonica followed them and stirred up opposition. Apparently, Timothy did join Paul in Athens (note the we in 1 Thes 3:1–2), but Paul sent him back to Thessalonica to help the young church that was going through tribulations. Several important factors were involved in this move.[91] Wiersbe lists several factors that attributed to this move. The first factor is Paul's concern. Paul shows genuine concern for the Thessalonian church. Wiersbe says, "It was because of this love that he could not abandon them when they needed spiritual help. Paul was not only an evangelist; he was also a pastor. He knew that soul-winning was but one part of the commission God gave him. These new believers must also be taught and established in the faith."[92] He goes on to say, "Instead, Paul chose to be left alone in Athens so that Timothy could return to Thessalonica and establish the saints. The word translated left in 1 Thessalonians 3:1 means to leave loved ones at death. In 1 Thessalonians 2:17 he said that he felt orphaned from his friends in Thessalonica, and the Greek word can also mean bereaved."[93]

Wiersbe say that Timothy was the ideal man for the job at Thessalonica. Timothy was the ideal man to send to the church to help them stand firm. Timothy and Titus were Paul's special agents whom he used as troubleshooters whenever the churches had

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[90]Ibid., 50.

[91]W. W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary,* 1 Thes 3:1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996).

[92]Ibid.

[93]Ibid.

problems.[94] The purpose of Paul sending Timothy to Thessalonica, according to the *Pulpit Commentary*, was to confirm the Thessalonians in the faith, to exhort them to perseverance in Christianity, notwithstanding the persecutions to which they were exposed.[95]

Paul, in verses 3-5, deals with the issues that were surrounding the Thessalonian church. According to the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, another goal of Timothy's visit was that the Christians would not lose their spiritual balance and stability as a result of the trials they were experiencing.[96] It goes on to say according to verse 4, Paul reminded his readers that when he was with them he kept telling them to expect persecution. And circumstances had turned out just as he had predicted. This reminder would have helped calm them down.[97]

Paul now returns to his original thought according to the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*. Paul explains that he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica because he was genuinely concerned for their spiritual welfare.[98] The writer says the condition of the believer's faith burdened Paul's heart. Paul saw Satan as using the persecution the Thessalonians were undergoing in order to lure them away from what they knew to be God's will, namely, perseverance in the midst of trials. He was concerned that Satan

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[94]Ibid.

[95]Spence-Jones, "1 Thessalonians," *The Pulpit Commentary*, 54.

[96]Walvoord, Zuck, & Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary,* 698.

[97]Ibid.,698.

[98]Ibid.

might snatch away the seed Paul had sown before it had a chance to put down stabilizing, fructifying roots.[99]

In verses 6-10, Timothy reports his success in the church:

> But contrasts Paul's previous anxiety with his present relief at the report of Timothy who returned to Paul in Corinth. Rather than bringing bad news that the Thessalonians' faith had wavered, Timothy had brought good news that their faith was bearing fruit in love. This good news was as thrilling to Paul as the gospel; he used the same Greek word for both messages.[100]

Verse 6 shows that Paul is thrilled at the response of the work that Timothy was doing in Thessalonica. Timothy was sent to Thessalonica for a purpose and, according to this verse, was successful in fulfilling his purpose. In verse 7, Paul expresses his feeling of comfort because of the report of Timothy. Because of ongoing persecution, the Thessalonian believers were in danger of abandoning their active faith. But Timothy brought good news! These new believers turned to God with joy in the midst of their affliction and were continuing to serve God while awaiting their ultimate deliverance[101] D. M. Martin states, "In the lengthy sentence that makes up these verses, the primary statement is we were encouraged (v. 7). The news brought by Timothy (v. 6) was the cause of the encouragement. The distress and persecution of the apostle was the context into which it came (v. 7a), and the hopeful expression in v. 8 is its outgrowth. One of the purposes of Timothy's visit was to encourage (the same verb is used in v. 2 and v. 7) the faith of the Thessalonians. Timothy's return with good news encouraged the

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[99]Ibid.

[100]J. F. Walvoord, R. B. Zuck, & Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures,* vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 698-699.

[101]J. W. Elias, "1 and 2 Thessalonians," *Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995), 115–116.

missionaries. Mutual encouragement implies mutual concern, respect, and a capacity to minister to one another."[102]

Martin goes on to say, concerning verse 8:

> In the midst of his own suffering Paul was encouraged when Timothy returned with good news regarding the love and faith of the Thessalonians. The last phrase of v. 7, 'because of your faith,' picks up the mention of the faith of the Thessalonians in v. 6 and leads to the emotional outburst of v. 8. Paul's love for the church was such that their perseverance in the Lord impacted his very life. 'Since you stand firm' (NIV) suggests certainty and sounds like a statement about past perseverance. The sentence, however, is conditional and might better be rendered 'if you stand fast' (RSV), implying a future expectation rather than a statement about the past. The verb *stēkō* is used repeatedly as a call for continued perseverance.[103]

Paul ends this passage that he will continually pray for the Thessalonians to strengthen their faith.

Choice of Passages for Biblical Perspective

Jeremiah 29:1-10 and 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10 both have one thing in common as to why these passages of scripture were chosen: pastoral care. The aforementioned scriptures both show care and concern for two different groups of people. In the first group, the persons were exiled from their homeland but were told not to give into despair. The persons were told to settle into the place of exile and pray for peace because their lives depended on it. Jeremiah did not focus on the negative portion of the circumstance but allowed them to assimilate into the culture and survive. In the second passage of scripture, Paul showed pastoral care to a different group of people. These persons were questioning the message of Paul. The church was confused about the

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[102]D. M. Martin, "1, 2 Thessalonians," *The New American Commentary,* vol. 33 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 105.

[103]Ibid., 106-107.

second coming of Christ. Paul had to tackle these issues and encourage the faith of the church. In this passage, Paul was unable to go there, so he sent Timothy. Paul knew who to send to tackle of the issues surrounding the church. Timothy was successful and reported back to Paul. This news was joyous to Paul and he, in turn, encouraged the church.

In both passages of scripture, the individuals cared for both groups of people. The needs of the people were taken into consideration and the plan was given to them. Jeremiah and Paul addressed the needs of the groups to which they were ministering. This biblical perspective does not speak to the reaction of the letter sent to the exiles, but for future study, chapter 30 shows the exiles' reaction. The reaction of the Thessalonian church was positive and this is shown by the report given to Paul by Timothy.

These passages of scriptures speak to pastoral care. Both individuals addressed the needs of their respective groups. The reaction of the groups, however, was not the same, but it did not negate the care show by Jeremiah and Paul. No one can control the actions of any person or persons, but care and concern should still be shown. These passages of scripture speak to the issues that may plague churches. In itinerancy-led organizations, there may not be time to show the care and concern needed to foster stability in the group or congregation, but the care still needs to be shown. In the second passage of scripture, it is shown that Paul was unable to reach the Thessalonian church but was able to send Timothy to reach the people. In denominations that are itinerant-led, the right person needs to be sent to the right church to foster positive results. Although there is no specific timeframe as to when these results will take place, or even

if they will, the pastor or leader of the congregation must not forget to exhibit pastoral care and concern.

Pastoral care, as defined by Edward Wimberly says, "Pastoral care can be defined as bringing all the resources of the faith story into the context of caring relationships, to bear upon the lives of people as they face life's struggles which are personal, interpersonal, and emotional."[104]

This theological foundation will rest on at least three pillars that are seen in the messages of various pieces of African American sacred music. Music, since the conception and inception of the Negro spirituals, has evolved, but the messages of music can still be heard. African American sacred music was created out of the enslaved Africans' realities. The messages of the music ranged from plans to escape to validating the slaves' will to live. There are various writers of African American sacred music who still lean on the same type of messages in their songs. The pillars that will be discussed in this section are the pillars of hope, deliverance, and suffering. These pillars, while not exclusive to all African American sacred music, are the pillars that were lifted out of the experiences of the researcher, the researcher's context and the music of today. The researcher has experienced living without faith, suffering through abuse and almost losing all hope, and needing to be delivered. The researcher was able to use the messages of African American sacred music to provide what had been lost in his life and provide what was needed.

When African Americans arrived on American shores in the 1800's, they had to adapt to a new way of life. This particular way of life caused them to accept a dismal

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[104]Edward P. Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 18.

reality, but coupled with Western Christendom, allowed them to survive their present reality while looking toward a greater future reality. It is the belief of the researcher that using the messages of African American sacred music will do the same for those living in the 21st Century: enable all persons to survive their present reality while looking toward a greater future reality. When pastoral care is administered, the goal is, or at least should be, to encourage, edify, and build up those who come and are in need of pastoral care. While there are present realities that may seem too much for these individuals to handle, the messages of African American sacred music will be able to speak to the realities of the individuals and provide the resilience and wherewithal they need to survive.

The Pillar Of Hope

The theological value of the spirituals for the enslaved Africans in this country was the belief of those in bondage that God would liberate them, just as He set the children of Israel free. The Negro spirituals were a source of hope; although the slaves' reality was that they were in bondage. Spirituals allowed the slaves to express their trust in God, who was acting and moving on their behalf. This is precisely the reason that spirituals hold a similar relevance for today's believer who may be in bondage or some sort of "slavery." We should be seeking after God who, in the midst of our bondage, can empower us to be hopeful for liberation, even when we have not witnessed God's liberation yet.

Thurman asserts that "there are three major sources from which the raw materials of the Negro spirituals were derived: the Old Testament and New Testament, the world of nature and the personal experiences of religion that were the common lot of the people,

emerging from their inner life. Echoes from each source are present in practically all the songs."[105]

An example of a powerful spiritual is "There is a Balm in Gilead." This spiritual, according to Jones, expresses the predominant experience of hope and healing that has been at the center of the African American experience since the beginning of slavery and has always received direct expression in the spirituals.[106] Thurman explains the backdrop of this spiritual in his work, *Deep River: The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death.* The author explains how the setting of the song is the book of Jeremiah, where Jeremiah asks, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Thurman further describes the song's background by revealing that Jeremiah is not directing his question toward anyone in particular. "He is searching his own soul."[107] Jeremiah looks inside of himself and is actually saying, "There is a balm in Gilead." Thurman then explains, "The slave caught the mood of this spiritual dilemma, and with it, did an amazing thing. He straightened the question mark in Jeremiah's sentence into an exclamation point: 'There is a balm in Gilead!' Here is a note of creative triumph."[108] Thurman further states, "The basic insight here is one of optimism—an optimism that grows out of the pessimism of life and transcends it. It is an optimism that uses the pessimism of life as raw material out of which it creates its own strength."[109]

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[105]Howard Thurman, Deep *River and the Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1975), 12.

[106]Arthur C. Jones, *Wade in the Water: The Wisdom gf The Spirituals* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 143.

[107]Thurman, Deep *River and the Negro Spiritua,* 56.

[108]Ibid.

[109]Ibid.

Jones refers to Thurman's interpretation and points out that, according to Thurman, "Balm In Gilead" is an especially important song in the spirituals tradition because it expresses the ability of the enslaved Africans to transform sorrow into joy and make a way where no way seemed possible. That ultimate message of hope and healing is found as well in the archetypically powerful music and lyrics of hundreds of other spirituals; it is the product of a creative tension between awareness of painful oppressive circumstances and the simultaneous envisioning of a hopeful future.[110]

Pinn asserts:

> God recognized what was happening and was committed to bringing blacks through this pain and suffering. Dwelling in slavery or continued discrimination might counter this claim for some, but for those singing the spirituals... it was understood that God sometimes allowed the chosen people to be refined in the fire and prepared for a great destiny."[111]

Hope, as seen by Thurman and Pinn, has the ability to sustain individuals during their present realities—those who are able to look toward a better future reality. Long posits in his work, *Generating Hope: A Strategy for Reaching the Postmodern Generation,* "To reach Generation X and coming postmodern generations we need to 'live in the present from a future perspective.' We need to live in the present and meet people where they are in the midst of their pain and suffering. More than anything else this generation needs hope for the future since at present it has no hope. People without hope live in despair."[112] Long then quotes Jurgen and Moltmann, who posit in their work, entitled *Theology of Hope,* "Living without hope is no longer living. Hell is hopelessness and it is

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[110]Arthur C. Jones, *Wade in the Water* (Boulder, Co: Leave a Little Room, 2005), 142.

[111]Anthony B. Pinn, *The Black Church in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 48.

[112]Jimmy Long, *Generating Hope: A Strategy for Reaching the Postmodern Generation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 116.

not for nothing that at the entrance of Dante's hell there stands these words: 'Abandon hope, all you who enter.'"[113]

Long also quotes Conyers from his work, entitled *The Eclipse of Heaven*, "As we today move from the enlightenment era to a postmodern world, we, like the Israelites, have to be willing to give up the world as we have known it and be willing to wait for what God will show us for the future. The Israelites had to wait on God for over one hundred years to show them that he had not abandoned them completely and that he would still fulfill his promises. Even in the midst of the exile, God continued to care for the Israelites and to teach them to put their hope in him as their faithful God who keeps his promises, not despairing in the midst of adverse circumstances."[114] In dealing with hope, Long states, "This future hope gives the postmodern generation a perspective by which to view life—a perspective that brings personal peace in the present and eternal peace in the future."[115] Thurman suggests that the frustration and divine deliverance, as set forth in the stories of the Hebrews in bondage, spoke at once to the deep need in the life of the slaves. They were literalists in their interpretations, not only because such was the dominant pattern of the religious thinking of the environment, but also because their needs demanded it.[116]

The slaves connected their plight to the plight of the Israelites, and Long uses the story of the Israelites to describe the hope the church can provide the postmodern generation. Long states:

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[113]Ibid.,116.

[114]Ibid., 119.

[115]Ibid.,120.

[116]Thurman, 14.

> Generation X and the emerging postmodern world are searching for something to guide them as they live in the present and look toward the future. We have a golden opportunity to proclaim God's hope. If we do not provide direction, others will. Biblical hope is not built on confidence, but it builds confidence because it is based on the character of God, not human potential or human capacity... God is our hope.[117]

Long quotes Herman Ridderbos to support his aforementioned statement when he writes, "Hope comes not from the situation, but from someone outside the situation. Hope is 'not a weaker form of believing and knowing,' but precisely a source of confidence and strength."[118]

Du Bois posits in his work, *The Souls of Black Folk,* "Through all the sorrow of the Sorrow Songs, there breathes a hope—a faith in the ultimate justice of things. The minor cadences of despair change often to triumph and calm confidence. Sometimes it is faith in life, sometimes a faith in death, sometimes assurance of boundless justice in some fair world beyond…"[119]

The Pillar Of Deliverance

Cone suggests in his work, entitled *The Spirituals and the Blues,* that "the Black experience in America is a history of servitude and resistance, or survival in the land of death. It is a story of Black life in chains and what that meant for the souls and bodies of Black people."[120] He goes on further to assert that this is the experience that created the spirituals, and it must be recognized if we are to render a valid theological interpretation

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[117]Long, *Generating Hope*, 126.

[118]Ibid.

[119]W. E. B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1994), 162.

[120]James Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1972), 20.

of these songs.[121] Cone argues that the divine liberation of the oppressed from slavery is the central theological concept in the Black spirituals.

These songs show that Black slaves did not believe that human servitude was reconcilable with their African past and their knowledge of the Christian gospel. They did not believe that God created Africans to be the slaves of Americans.[122] Cone suggests even further that the basic idea of the spirituals is that slavery contradicts God; it is a denial of God's will. To be enslaved is to be declared nobody, and that form of existence contradicts God's creation to people to be God's children. Because Black people believed they were God's children, they affirmed their *somebodiness*, refusing to reconcile their servitude with divine revelation.[123] Cone also states that the message of liberation in the spirituals is based on the biblical contention that God's righteousness is revealed in deliverance of the oppressed from the shackles of human bondage. That message was an expression of the slave's confidence that can be trusted to stand by God's Word… the slave firmly believed that "God would make a way out of no way," meaning that God's providential care of God's children cannot be thwarted by white masters.[124]

Cone gives an idea regarding how the slaves viewed life in reference to freedom:

> The slaves' view of God embraced the whole of life—their joys and hopes, their sorrows and disappointments; and their basic belief was that God had not left them alone, and that God would set them free from human bondage. That is the central theological idea in black slave religion as reflected in the spirituals…"[125]

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[121]Ibid., 20.

[122]Ibid., 32.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues,* 33.

[125]Ibid., 43.

Walker asserts that "the common thread and theme of Spiritual Music were 'De Udder worl' is not like dis.' Release and freedom, physical and spiritual, were the slaves' uppermost concern."[126] Walker illustrates this in an example of a spiritual, entitled *"Go Down Moses."* Walker states, "Perceptive and intuitive spiritual insights of the New World Africans saw instantly the parallel between their circumstances in this alien land and the that of the house of Israel in the land of Egypt. This Spiritual hymn with its majestic cadences was the expressed hope and desire that God would send a 'Moses' into the Egypt land of slavery and command the Pharaohs of the slavocracy to 'let [his] people go.'"[127] Walker then lines the spiritual and says that it has universal appeal to all oppressed people.

Hildred Roach, according to Walker, concedes that the spirituals were "laden with obsessions about 'freedom land,'" though there is some ambiguity as to whether 'Jesus' was intended to be the God of Christianity, Ntoa, the supernatural spirits of ancestors, or to a Harriet Tubman of the Underground Railroad.[128] Cone states, "Spirituals are historical songs which speak about the rupture of Black lives; they tell us about a people in the land of bondage and what they did to hold themselves together and to fight back."[129] Cone further states that in the spirituals, "Black slaves combined the memory of their fathers with the Christian gospel and created an existence that participated in their

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[126]Wyatt Tee Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 34.

[127]Ibid., 56-57.

[128]Ibid., 59.

[129]Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues,* 30.

liberation from earthly bondage. The spiritual, then, is the spirit of the people struggling to be free; it is their religion, their source of strength in a time of trouble."[130]

Spencer posits in his work, *Protest and Praise,* "For the enslaved Africans, the first blows of liberation from bondage could only have been brought about by those liberated from a slave mentality—who, being brought up in the midst of oppressors, appropriated the power and wisdom of the gospel... Not everyone was or had to be a Moses in order to initiate the process of liberation; too many of his kind would have resulted in revolution rather than exodus. But with the first blows of liberation dealt, it was God's time to compel the oppressors by a mighty hand."[131] Spencer further posits:

> Whether the people of Africa were engaged in actions of insurrection, or exodus, or incessant passages into liberation, or through masked confrontation and conflict, one thing is clear and evident in the spirituals: The enslaved figured out why they should be free – 'My Lord delivered Daniel/and why not every man?' and the figuring was done in a situation of liberation, commencing with the 'middle passage' when some engaged in insurrection and others leaped headlong into the sea just to be free. The spirituals were theological reflections of a long-standing practice of liberation and therefore songs of revelation and liberation.[132]

Spencer illustrates this by using the example of the Spiritual "Nobody Knows." Before he lists the words of the song, he says, "Throughout the corpus of the spirituals, the enslaved Africans are portrayed as liberated from sorrow songs by their unquestioning faith…

> Nobody know the trouble I've seen,
>
> Nobody knows but Jesus.

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[130]Ibid.

[131]Jon Michael Spencer, *Protest & Praise: Sacred Music of Black Religion* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 5.

[132]Ibid., 8.

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen,

Glory, hallelujah!"[133]

Raboteau posits in his work, *Canaan Land*:

> The Christian slaves' identification with the biblical children of Israel was intensified by the songs, sermons, and prayers of their meetings, when the biblical past became dramatically present and the stories they sang about came alive. Once again God sent Moses to tell 'ol' Pharaoh let my people go. Once again the mighty wind of God parted the Red Sea so the Hebrew slaves could cross over dry land, while Pharaoh's army 'got drowned.' In the ecstasy of worship they reenacted the trials and triumphs of God's chosen people and so reaffirmed their won value and dignity, as they kept up their own hope for freedom.[134]

Chenu quotes an article written by John Lovell in 1939:

> … the spiritual was essentially social and excellent means of revealing the resistance of the slaves and their earthly aspirations. Three themes run through these songs: the slaves' desire for a concrete freedom, the slaves' aspiration for justice that would call to account those who oppressed them, and the slaves' strategy to attain a better future, a land of freedom.[135]

The then-present reality of the slaves did not stop them from looking to a time when they would no longer be slaves, when they would be free. The stories the slaves heard from the preachers and in the various songs allowed the slaves to look toward a time when freedom would not be attainable but attained.

The Pillar Of Theodicy

"The term *theodicy* (θεός δίκη) signifies a speculative justification of the ways of God towards the human race, especially as respects the origin of evil, and the moral government of the world. It was first exalted into a department of theological science by

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[133]Ibid., 12.

[134]Albert J. Raboteau, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 44-45.

[135]Bruno Chenu, *The Trouble I've Seen: The Big Book of Negro Spirituals* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003), 107.

the great German philosopher Leibnitz, in his great work entitled 'Theodicy, or the Goodness of God, the Liberty of Man, and the Origin of Evil,' A. D. 1710."[136] Pinn posits in his work, *Why, Lord?* "...the spirituals not only speak of God, Christ, and heaven; they speak of God out of and in the context of Black suffering, using the language of 'theodicy': What is God doing about our suffering?" He further supports his statement by quoting John Lovell, in his work *Black Song,* and says that Lovell acknowledges this nagging question in the spiritual, which forms the basis of theodicy:

> Although the prevailing view is essentially optimistic, the spiritual is honeycombed with realistic doubts and fears. Sometimes, the poet is not sure he has what it takes, or that religion is strong enough to override evil... or that justice is not man's greatest illusion.[137]

Pinn posits, "Theodicy seeks to understand the mystery of God's activity and presence in a world seemingly gone wrong. The spirituals do not deny God as a result of Black suffering because they see God working through pain. Nonetheless, this continuing belief in God's justice is not a denial of philosophical inquiry ('theodicy')."[138] Pinn further posits, "the complete response to theodicy, however, is found in the suffering itself as opposed to the final reward given to those who suffer (i.e., heaven). That is, the passion of Christ taught slaves that suffering has the power to transform situations when handled properly. Suffering can be redemptive, and suffering's redemptive nature is the slave's final response to 'theodicy.'"[139]

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[136]A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology: Rewritten and Enlarged* (New York, NY: Hodder & Stoughton, 1878), 243-244.

[137]Ibid., 34.

[138]Ibid., 36.

[139]Ibid., 37.

Kirk-Duggan also gives a perspective on theodicy in reference to the spirituals. She states, "By definition, the poetic justice-related texts, enhanced by and integrated with the music, express theodicy. The communal concern for justice expressed in the Spirituals infuses the music's performance and structural design, which are aimed at the humanity and God via the text and communal singing style that color performance."[140] Kirk-Duggan further posits, "The Spirituals, from a perspective of theodicy, are always about naming evil and suffering, being hopeful for transformation, and doing what one can to effect that change, working in concert with a God who cares. The antebellum Spirituals involve songs for daily life about religion, food, kinships, work, transformation, empowerment, being responsible, and hoping for a new day."[141]

She argues further, "… the Spirituals are rich and must be experienced as performed living documents for really hear the message of theodicy. The hearing of and the living with these texts, embodying the pain and the victory surrounding these texts, moves us toward a cultural reconstruction of human transformation."[142]

The Pillar Of Eschatology

Cone quotes B. A. Botkin from his work, *Lay My Burden Down*, "For Black people, the end of slavery was God's liberating act on behalf of oppressed people. As one slave expressed it:

> I' members 'bout the days of slavery, and I don't 'lieve they ever gwine have slaves no more on this earth.I think God down took that burden offen his Black

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[140]Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, *Exorcizing Evil: A Womanist Perspective on the Spirituals* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 109.

[141]Ibid., 74.

[142]Ibid.

> children, and I'm aiming to praise Him for it to His face in the days of glory which ain't far off."[143]

Cone asserts, "This is not a spiritual freedom; it is a eschatological freedom grounded in the events of the historical present affirming that even now God's future is inconsistent with the realities of slavery."[144] Cone further states, "The resurrections was an eschatological event which permeated both the present, and the future history of Black slaves. On the one hand, Jesus was present, in that he was their friend and companion in slavery. He enabled the people to bear the trouble and endure the pain of loneliness in oppression."[145] Cone asserts:

> These songs make clear that the future is not simply a reality to come. It is a reality that has already happened in Jesus' resurrection and is present now in the midst of the black struggle for liberation. To accept the future of God as disclosed in the present means that we cannot be content with the present political order. God's eschatological presence arouses discontentment and makes the present subject to radical changes. That was why black slaves could not sit down. They were on the move trying to get home. They accepted the consequences of the eschatological Kingdom and opened their minds and hearts to the movement of the future. They were bound for the Kingdom that was breaking into the already new present, and they affirmed their willingness to git on board that gospel train.[146]

Cone then lists four assertions in reference to black eschatology:

With reference to black eschatology, four concluding assertions can be made. (1) Black eschatology was based on historical possibilities. According to the black spirituals, belief in God's future meant accepting the burden and the risk of escape to the North and later Canada. (2) When black slaves realized that their historical possibilities were limited, they began to create structures of black affirmation, which protected their humanity even though they could not escape the chains of slavery. (3) The concept of heaven meant that God's righteousness, as revealed in the liberation of the oppressed, was sovereign. God alone was the ultimate Lord of history. The wicked will be punished and the victim with be vindicated. (4) The most crucial ingredient of black eschatology was its historicity.

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[143]Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues,* 42.

[144]Ibid.

[145]Ibid., 50.

[146]Ibid., 84-85.

Even when it was no longer feasible to expect radical historical evidence of God's liberation of the oppressed, black slaves' image of God's future righteousness was always related to their present existence on earth. Eschatology then was primarily a religious perspective on the present, which enabled oppressed blacks to realize that their existence transcended historical limitations. This emphasis is, perhaps, the most important contribution to black religion as reflected in the spirituals.[147]

Thurman writes:

> When all hope for release in this world seems unrealistic and groundless, the heart turns to a way of escape beyond the present order. The options are very few for those who are thus circumstanced. Their belief in God leads quite definitely to a position that fixes their hope on deliverance beyond the grave. What a plaintive cry are these words: Don't leave me Lord, don't leave me behin'. There is desolation, fear, loneliness, but hope, at once desperate and profound![148]

Lincoln and Mamiya write, "Though many of the spirituals spoke of 'heaven,' this eschatological realm was actually anchored firmly in this world, first in their coded meaning, and second in their therapeutic value as survival tools."[149] The authors' further state:

> It is likely, then, that to the slave heaven meant both that the eschatological realm, and the North—whichever happened to come first; or the latter first and the former latter. On the other hand, through the singing of the spirituals the enslaved were able release their repressed emotions and anxieties and simultaneously experience the exhilaration of being creative under circumstances of unbelievable stress. They sang, hummed, clapped, moaned, stomped, and swayed themselves into a remarkable transcendence over their oppressive condition, and so dredged up the spiritual inspiration needed to endure until God would move to change their circumstances for the better.[150]

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[147]Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues, 95.*

[148]Howard Thurman, *Deep River and the Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1975), 26.

[149]C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 352.

[150]Ibid., 352.

Conclusion

The theological pillars in this section are not exhaustive in reference to the messages of the spirituals. However, the pillars discussed give a deeper look at how the messages of the songs can still provide hope in this post-modern society. The meter or original musicality of the songs may not be palatable for this generation, because of the other genres of music available, but the messages of the spirituals are just as important today as they were during slavery. Giovanni suggests that slavery is the key to the twenty-first century.[151] She writes, "These people, these enslaved Africans, are the key, because they are the only people who have been in a unknown place without landmarks and found a way to stay human and sane.[152] She further states, "The Africans knew that whatever came when they landed could not possibly be anymore pleasant that it was at the beginning. And yet found a way to raise a song, to raise their voice, and to maintain their spirit."[153]

Giovanni goes on to write, "We have to come back to the strength of those people, those Africans, who knew this was not a good idea. But they decided, 'I am going to go through it; I am going to go through it and make it a song."[154] The aforementioned statements show the hope the slaves had that the trouble they were facing would not last forever. The enslaved Africans looked forward to a time when slavery would not be a part of their lives and they would longer be oppressed. Pinn posits, "The musical content

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[151]Nikki Giovanni, *On My Journey Now: Looking at African-American History through the Spirituals* (Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2007), 64.

[152]Ibid.

[153]Ibid.

[154]Ibid.

of the spirituals is not all that survived; the basic theological outlook contained in the lyrics repeatedly presents itself."[155] The theological lens through which the spirituals are viewed show people who, though their physical bodies were bound, their minds were free. In an interview, a former slave refers to spirituals as follows:

> We, the old folks, we composed them (the spirituals) in an instant… the notes are right for you, but for us they are a mystery… On the Lord's Day, we were all in the house of prayer and the White preacher was explaining the Scripture and read what Ezekiel had said: 'The dry bones will live again.' And, dear, the Lord all brilliant appeared in those pages and revived my old black heart, and I jumped here and there and shouting and singing and tapping my feet, and the others caught my words and I sang them on an old prayer melody from Africa that I had heard them sing, and the others took them and repeated them, and continued to add to them and it became a *Spiritual."*[156]

[155]Pinn, *Why, Lord?*, 38.

[156]Lewis V. Baldwin, A Home in Dat Rock: Afro-American Folk Sources and Slave Visions of Heaven and Hell. *Journal of Religious Thought, 41,* no.1 (spring-summer 1984): 40

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The hypothesis of this project is hope can be fostered through the messages of the spirituals when administering pastoral care. The spiritual were birthed out of a demeaning and downgrading context. There are some whose context is not to different from those who experienced slavery. It is my belief that the messages of the spirituals are still relevant in this 21st Century context, and can be an aid when administering pastoral care.

A quantitative strategy of phenomenology will be used to ascertain data for this project. In this strategy, I hope to gain insight in the context in which I serves. The messages of the spirituals can be used as a vehicle to foster hope in this postmodern society. I plan to use the quantitative approach to explore the members of the context to see if the messages of the spirituals will be beneficial in pastoral care. It is my hypotheses that if the messages of the spirituals were included in pastoral care, then hope can be fostered.

The evaluating tool, per United Theological Seminary, will be triangulated. The first arm of this triangulation was a four-week preaching series. The second arm of this triangulation was a pre-test and a posttest. The test included fifteen questions regarding the messages of the spirituals and if they would be able to foster hope if infused into pastoral care. The third arm of this triangulation was a focus group formed with the context associates with other members of the context.

The project was conducted at Campbell African Methodist Episcopal Church, located in the Frankford section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The context is a two hundred and seven year old church with a population of approximately two hundred and nineteen. There are two worship services held on Sundays with the exception of the first Sunday. The age of the congregation is twelve months to ninety years old.

The first arm of triangulation was the pre and post survey. The pre survey was distributed on the first Sunday of June. This survey was included in the worship program. An announcement to the congregation was made that participation in the survey was completely voluntary. The survey was completed during the worship experience and collected by the context associates. The ages of the respondents ranged from fifteen to over eighty. The context encompasses all of the ages in between the aforementioned numbers, so the researcher wanted to incorporate persons from each age group. The pre surveys were collected on the first Sunday of June. The post surveys were distributed on the fourth Sunday of June during the worship experience. The context had already been given the information about the survey, so the instructions to complete the survey were already known. The surveys were collected at the conclusion of the worship experience by the context associates and returned to the researcher.

The questions on the survey looked at the demographics of the respondents (age, sex, and ethnicity.) The questions also looked at the respondent's belief in God and the relevancy of music in the worship experience. The survey also asked the respondents their definition of Negro Spirituals, what music they listen to in order to cope in difficult times, and if they have been exposed to songs considered Negro Spirituals. The survey also asked the respondents if they believed that Negro Spirituals could be used to foster

hope in today's society. The questions allowed me to see how the respondents felt about Negro Spirituals and if they could be used to foster hope to those living in the twenty-first Century.

The second arm of triangulation was a four-week preaching series. The sermons preached during this series started with a Negro Spiritual paralleled with a story in scripture. The sermons focused on several instances in scripture where hoped could be found even peculiar circumstances. A hermeneutical bridge was built by looking at the twenty-first Century context to show how the context is different given slavery is not as prevalent today as it was during the time of slavery, but hope can still be fostered no matter the context.

The final arm of triangulation was a focus group formed with the context associates, along with other members of the congregation. This focus group was formed to relive the journey through the preaching series, as well as the pre and post surveys to get an in depth look into the thoughts of the members of the congregants. The focus group was comprised of seven members of the congregation. The age range of the focus group was fifteen to sixty-five. The reason these persons were select persons from the various age group was see how Negro Spirituals are perceived in the various age brackets of the church.

The aforementioned research methodologies were chosen for several reasons. The first reason was the time of year the project was completed. The project was to be conducted in one context but due to a change in pastoral appointments was completed in a different context. The project could not be completed because of a scheduling conflict between the old context and the new context. The calendar of the new context had

already been in place since the context was getting prepared for the end of the year annual conference. The researcher was told by the leaders of the context that the parishioners of the context started taking vacations in the beginning of the month of May and it would be beneficial to complete the project before July. The month of June had been chosen to complete the sermon series and this time would also be used to complete the pre and post survey.

Another reason these specific methodologies were chosen is because of the age range of the congregation. Twenty percent of the congregation is thirty-nine years of age and younger. Eighty percent of the congregation is forty years of age and older. The researcher wanted to present a methodology that would work with a fifteen year old as well as a seventy-five year old. A written pre and post survey would be able to accomplish this task. The distribution and collection of the surveys had been the responsibility of the context associates. The focus group methodology was chosen as the third arm of triangulation in order to take an in-depth look into thoughts of the participants in the first two arms of triangulation. The participants in the focus group were able to give their personal experiences with Negro Spirituals outside of Black History Month.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

I was transferred to a new context on March 2, 2014. It was decided that my project would still be done at the previous context. The schedule of the current context and the schedule of the former context did not allow this to take place, so the project was completed within the current context. Several moments were taken to explain the doctor of ministry program and the basis for the project. The nature of the project was also explained and participation in the project was completely voluntary. The context was verbally asked to participate. For the context members under the age of thirteen, the parents had to give their consent. It was during this time, the context associates were selected based on availability during the worship experience on the Sunday prior to the sermon series taking place and the surveys being distributed. Instructions for the survey were explained to the context at the beginning of the sermon series and at the end.

Including the survey in the worship bulletin was also explained. The context associates were given their assignments and told they would be responsible for collecting the surveys during the time of the sermon series and they would also be a part of the focus group at the conclusion of the sermon series. The context associates agreed to the terms of the project allowing the process to begin on the first Sunday of June 2014.

Changes and Challenges

As stated in the previous section of this chapter, the challenge presented itself when I was transferred from my previous context. I had previously set up workshops and a concert to complete the project. When I was transferred to my current context, the concert was in conflict with things that were already on the calendar. This conflict caused a modified plan to go into effect in order to complete the project. The officers of the current context advised me of the times of the year members took vacation. The officers explained that everyone may not participate based on availability but would receive help in order to get as much participation as possible. This information, coupled with calendar conflicts caused methodological changes in order to facilitate participation from all ages of the context. Therefore, the methods of a pre and post survey, a sermon series, and a focus group were implemented in order to complete the three arms of triangulation.

Pre/Post Survey and Data Collection and Analysis

There were seventeen questions asked on the pre survey. Twenty participants completed the survey. The survey was distributed on the first Sunday of June. There was time allotted during the service to complete the survey. This time was also used for questions if any of the participants did not understand was being asked of them. When the surveys were completed, the context associates collected them during the time of offering since the offering was collected before the sermon. It was explained to the participants any survey not completed before the sermon would not be accepted due to the nature of the project.

Sermon Series

Through study and research, it was determined that many of the Negro Spirituals have a scriptural background. The researcher decided to use four Negro Spirituals with scriptural backgrounds in various contexts to show hope can be found in a myriad of circumstances. The second portion of the project was a sermon series that focused on finding hope in various situations coupled with the Negro Spirituals. The purpose of the sermon series had a two-fold purpose. The first purpose was to lift the messages of the Negro Spirituals. The second purpose of the series was to lift up the correlation between the Negro Spirituals and the Holy Bible. The four sermons preached during the series were, "There's Hope in the Spirituals" (Ps 137:4), "There's Hope in the Valley" (Ez 37:3), "There's Hope in Bondage" (Ex 3:10), and "We Can Have Hope in the Balm" (Jer 8:22).

Focus Group

The focus group consisted of seven individuals; four context associates and three persons from the context who opted not to hold the position of a context associate. The object of the focus group was to summarize the information given throughout the sermon series and take an in-depth look into the experiences of the context members in regards to the Negro Spirituals. The age range of the participants of the focus group was fifteen to sixty. The researcher wanted to make sure that various ages were represented when conducting the focus group.

Pre/Post Survey Data Analysis

There were twenty participants in the pre survey and twenty-three participants in the post survey. The date below shows the results of the date collected based on the response of the participant. The chart listed below has the answers to the closed ended questions, i.e., what is your gender, what is your race? Immediately following the chart, the open-ended questions are listed with their answers, i.e., does music help you cope with music in difficult times, if so, what type, and name a Negro Spiritual. The reason for the difference in the explanation of these answers is to show the various answers collected in order to support the hypothesis.

Number	Question	Pre Survey Answer	Post Survey Answer
1.	What is your gender?	55%-Male 45%-Female	82.6%-Female 17.4% Male
2.	What is your race?	90% Black 10% Multiple Races	Post 80%- Black, 13% Multiple Races
3.	What is your ethnicity?	100% Non Hispanic	100% Non Hispanic
4.	What is your age range	Pre- 10%(17-under) 5%(18-29) 30%(50-59) 25% (60-69) 20% (70-79) 10% (80-Over)	Post -4.3%(17-under) 13%(18-29) 4.3% (30-39), 4.3%(40-49) 47.8 %(50-59) 8.7% (60-69) 8.7% (70-79) 8.7% (80-Over)

6.	Do you believe in God?	100%-Yes	100%-Yes
7.	How relevant do you believe music to the worship experience?	85%-Very Relevant 10%-Relevant 5%-Neutral	73.9%Very Relevant 21.7%-Relevant 4.3%-Hardly Relevant
9.	Have you been exposed to Negro Spirituals?	100%-Yes	100%Yes

Data Collection of Open-Ended Questions

Question 5 asked, "Does music help you cope in difficult times? Is so, what type?" On the pre survey, the answers were: 6 answered yes with no response as to what type, 4 answered all types, 4 answered Gospel, 1 answered no, 1 answered Oldies, Gospel Spirituals R & B, Jazz, Blue Grass and Country, 1 answered Gospel, R & B, and Hip-Hop, 1 answered classical, and 1 skipped the question.

On the post survey, 5 persons said Gospel, 4 persons said all types, 2 persons said Gospel and Spirituals, 2 persons said Gospel and Jazz, 1 person said Jazz, Gospel and R and B, 1 person said Gospel, Neo-Soul, and Hip-Hop, 1 person said Spirituals, Jazz and Blues, 1 person said Inspirational, 1 person said Hymns, 1 person said Gospel and R & B and 1 persons said Spirituals and Gospel and 3 persons answered the question yes with no response as to what type.

Question 8 asked, "What is the definition of a Negro Spiritual?" On the pre survey, one person skipped the question, but the other answers were as follows:

- A Black singing gospel that shows how they feel
- A song that lifts you up
- Black spiritual songs of inspiration
- Songs sung and written by the slaves
- Songs related to what we as a people went through
- Deeply rooted songs in biblical understanding and how they speak to specific events.
- Songs from the Negro slave era
- An old Black slave song
- Old time hymn from slavery which lifted spirits and communicated with each other
- A Negro spiritual is an old time song Blacks used to sing
- Songs that are inspirational, sung from the heart that dealt with life's experiences
- Songs of Hope
- A person that's God loved, a person that humble and grateful things
- A song that depicts life as a slave and black life in general
- Music sung to express religious life experiences of African Americans over the years
- A music that tells a story
- Singing about the Lord and Savior
- Songs written before 1963
- A story being told about our love for God

On the post survey, the answers were as follow:

- Songs sung by slaves as their form of worshipping God
- Songs that express feelings of those singing them, songs that deliver messages and directions
- Help in a dying world
- The spiritual where songs that give hope in a time where only hope and faith in God would bring them out of slavery
- A song derived from emotions and heart felt feelings
- Songs my ancestors sang from for encouragement and to secretly spread messages to other slaves
- Songs that teach us to never forget
- Makes us remember where we came from and where we are going.
- Tells a story, brings joy, knowledge of the past and praising God
- Soulful music founded within the black tradition created to stir the spirit for various emotions, instructions, etc.
- Music about the early days of Negroes
- To express yourself about what the Lord has done for you
- A song that was used during slavery to help slaves cope with hard times and to send messages to other slaves
- Uplifting
- The songs the slaves would sing as a release. It was a form of worshipping God
- Hymns and anthems sung by African Americans that spoke of hope through the goodness of God
- A song that was made during slavery in the United States to help slaves communicate and give hope that things will work out

- Hope
- Negro Spirituals are songs of hope and faith. God is always with us
- A song that speaks to your soul. It causes you to reminisce about where you have come from and what you have endured
- I think it is freedom
- Songs that help people have faith and make it through no matter how bad things are
- Truthful words of Hope to get by on

Question 10 asked the participated, "Name a Negro Spiritual you have heard." Two persons answered none on the pre survey and all twenty-three persons answered with the name of a Negro Spiritual.

Pre Survey Answers	**Post Survey Answers**
None	Wade in the Water
None	I'll be alright and We shall overcome.
Wade in the Water	A long dusty road
Soon Ah Will be Done	There is a balm in Gilead.
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Wade in the Water	Wade in the Water
Lift Every Voice and Sing	Go Down Moses
Lord do it for me	If you've ever needed the Lord before you sure do need him now.
Wade in the Water	Soon Ah Will be Done
Lift Every Voice and Song	Wade in the Water
We Shall Overcome, Jesus is Love	Nobody knows the trouble I've seen
Let My People Go	Wade in the Water
Over my Head I hear music in the air	Wade in the Water
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	Wade in the Water
Wade in the Water	My Soul is anchored in the Lord.
Peace Be Still	Wade in the Water
Let My People Go	Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
	Swing Low Sweet Chariot.
	His eye is on sparrow
	Swing Low Sweet Chariot
	Nobody knows the trouble I've seen
	Swing Low Sweet Chariot

Question 11 asked the participants, "Name three feelings you experience when listening to Negro Spirituals." The chart below lists the pre survey answers:

Feeling One	Feeling Two	Feeling Three
Happy	Reflective	Soul Satisfaction
Sad	Hopeful	Happy
Uplifting	Hope	Encouragement
Struggle	Hardship	Victory
Peace	Respect	Closer to God
Relief	Joy	Grief
Affirmation	Joy/Euphoria	Freedom
Joy	Peace	Love
Sad	Happy	Thought Provoking
Power	Togetherness	One Accord with God
Special	Kind	Sweet
Uplifting	Moved	Inspired
Hope	Sorrow	Peace
Warm	Love	Emotional
Faith	Hope	Determination
Sensitive to the struggle of others	Importance of songs	Pride that our music is still being played
Faith	Joy	Peace
Goodness	A Blessing	Thinking about God
Remember my ancestors	Thankful for my life	Exuberance about the future
Joy	Love	Happiness

The post survey answers to question 11 are as follows:

Feeling One	Feeling Two	Feeling Three
Faith	Belief	Uplifted
Peacefulness	Happiness	joy
relief	hope	Strength
Joy	Hope	Happy
Sadness	Hope	Encouragement
Sadness	Hope	Proud
Love	Hurt	Knowing God

Hope	Unity	Happiness
Peace	Love	Comfort
Joy	Encouragement	Songs Meaningful
Lift Spirit	Words Meaningful	Fulfillment
Joy	Hope	Freedom
Happiness	Hope	Belief
Love	Healing	Hope
Faith	Hope	Hope
Thankfulness	Elation	Love
Sadness	Happiness	Peace
Good	Hope	Freedom
Faith	Connected	Joy
Encouraged	Hope	Peace
Sadness	Faith	
Hope	Hope	
Sorrow		

Question 12 asked the participants, "Do you believe Negro Spirituals are beneficial in Pastoral Care?" Listed below are the answers from both the pre and post surveys.

Pre Survey Answers
Yes
Yes. Some people need to be uplifted
Yes. Keeping the Shepherd of the flock encouraged, and inspired. Rooted and grounded in the Lord.
Yes, they remind me us of where we have come from
Yes, I do because Negro Spirituals give a voice to issues, concerns, emotions, events, social crisis, etc. It gives people hope and encouragement.
Yes, because they show how far our people have come and because they(the slaves) believed things would get better.
Yes because they help you deal with things and make you think about the past.
Yes. They encourage people, given them hope, increase their faith and remind them that is always with them.
Yes. I do believe they are beneficial in pastoral care because they were made to praise the Lord.
Yes, Makes them feel closer to God and they touch the soul and enables the pastor to reach out and touch others
Yes. In remembrance to struggles. In remembrance to victory. In remembrance to

hope, and peace.
Yes. Because it helps people come together in one love
Yes. Spirituals give many different feelings
Yes. They can minister to the soul, elevate the spirit. The words and music can bless all.
Yes. They are full of past, present, and future feelings
Yes
Yes. They uplift the oppressed
Yes

The post survey answers to question 12 are as follows:

Post Survey Answers
Yes because the Negro Spirituals can be taken as forms of worship.
Helps the pastor offer encouragement and gives hope for a better life and strengthens us.
Yes because it gives a sources of hope to somebody and they can get their joy back.
They can help deliver a word to the people that may no hear it through message or to understand message better
It touches the part of you that is way below the surface. And it makes you think of where God is and how far God has brought you.
I think they can be when used in the right context and usually more upbeat versions of them
Yes, because it lifts me up and helps me remember those who have paved the way for me.
Yes
Yes. You're letting God know how much you love him, and praise him and hope that you will be with him someday.
Yes because they can create an environment to change to uplift and motivate along with other things. They also aid in the general internal mood of hope.
Yes. They give them a better understanding of what happened in the early days.
Yes, because the words of some of the songs open up your heart and soul.
Yes. Every spiritual I have heard has had some type of message to help bring people through. A pastor could use these songs in a sermon to help someone who may be going through a really difficult time.
Yes. You believe in God.
Yes because it is a form of worship
I believe Negro Spirituals minister to the spirit.

Yes. Because it tells about past peoples' problems and it can help you to deal with your issues and it can show you that things will get better.
Not sure as of yet
Yes. Because God's people are still in some kind of bondage, spirited, physical, mental, financial or relational.
Yes. It let the people know where we come from.
Yes because some things you can say the songs that songs can say another way.
Yes, they speak of troubles of the past that are present today in different situations.

Question 13 asked the participants, "How would you define hope? The charts listed below will provide the pre and post answers to this question.

Pre Survey Answers	Post Survey Answers
Hope is what people to know that things will get better.	Believing and having faith that something can happen.
Trust that something good will happen	Belief in the unbelievable.
Believing that there will be a better tomorrow.	A vision of light at the end of the tunnel.
Praying, and believing that things will get better.	What we trust in God for that if we live right when we pass, we will be with God.
The belief that things can get better	Waiting with great expectation that something you are waiting for will happen
I look on life for things to come.	It is the state of being encouraged when one's situation would suggest otherwise.
Inspired to believe in what may seem impossible at the present, but possible in the future.	Feeling faith and conviction
Things will get better in the future.	A dream to look forward to
Hope believes in something.	Something you want to take place in your life
There is something better.	Belief not yet realized, but expected.
I would define hope by saying you have a chance.	Yes. Gives opportunity to let you know that you can make it.
Something you can believe in when all else has left you.	Something to look for
Assurance	Having faith in something that is to happen or faith in someone you may know.

Hope is something we need to begin our life and spiritual life and to continue serving God because God is our blessed hope.	Renewing my mind in the Lord. Hope is belief in the Lord every day of my life.
Hope is praying for things to get better	It is a sense of wanting something to go the way you want. Also believing it can happen.
Knowing that God's got you. He said he would never leave you or forsake you. His word is true.	Hope believes in the will of God even though we cannot see all of the issues of the world.
Faith in the future and belief in God.	Expecting something to happen or change.
Something that you know the Lord has given you.	Everything will work out.
A glass half full	God's blessings for us to come.
Hope is something you want to happen	I can make it, I can do it, and I can go on.
	Believe that we will be in God's eyes.
	It says you can go on when everything else says that you can't.
	As a promise that situation will get better. Tomorrow will be a better day.

Question 14 asked the participants, "Do you think the Negro Spirituals can used as an aid to foster hope in persons in today's society? If yes, how? If no, why not? The chart below lists the answers of the participants.

Pre Survey Answers	**Post Survey Answers**
Yes	Yes. Because it can put you in a different state of mind.
Yes because if they inspired slaves and they will be able to help us now.	Let's on know how they made it and that you can make it too!
Yes, by giving hope.	It can give light to dark situation. It can give hope to the hopeless and bring joy to the people.
Yes, to keep you inspired.	Yes. If we listen to the word and truly understand what our people have been through.
Yes	All age groups will be able to relate to it in some form or another.
Yes, but they have to be taught about history.	Depends on how they are used. People need to understand the context created

	them in order to appreciate and benefit from them.
Yes, through it encouragement, liberation, and oneness of ideal and concern.	Yes
The spirituals can be bridge between today and the past.	Yes
Yes, I think so because it tells you about how bad things were before God and how we are making progress.	Spirituals embrace, puts your mind at ease, make you want to shout hallelujah.
Yes, Gives them something to hold onto and remind them that God is present.	Yes, just by the power of the words, music, and rendition. They touch the spirit on multiple levels and various people at the right time and different people in different demographics
Yes, I do because it can teach them more about God.	Yes. The words mean a lot.
Yes. It lets you know how to help others.	Yes. If you think about the worlds of the songs and keep them in your heart in can help
In remembrance to our ancestors the hope they had for freedom	Yes. Because some modern music doesn't have the uplifting messages.
Yes because it will better their view on things and when they into situations, they can look back on the song, reflect and move on positively.	Yes
It gives a feeling that makes you think about things	Yes. Because songs put someone in a different place and make them believe something can happen.
Yes. Each has its own message that can minister, bless, and address life's struggles, past and present	Yes. The Negro spiritual speaks too many of the same issues with today.
Yes. They are full of spirit and uplifting	Yes. It can help you with issues and give you hope in the time of need.
Yes. They will help you learn about things in the earlier years.	Not sure.
Only if they are continued to be sung	Yes. We could reintroduce the same version of the song or do a remix.
By having them	Yes, To let them know how far we've come.
	Yes.
	Yes, in my age group and older. We are familiar with songs and stories. No, for the younger age groups. They have not heard the Negro Spirituals and old stories.

Question 15 of the survey asked the participants, "What messages do you believe are sent through Negro Spirituals?" The chart below will provide their answers.

Pre Survey Answers	**Post Survey Answers**
Hope and Love	The Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want.
A cry for help.	Gives me hope and let me know others care and can help. Shows me how to do things and what needs to be done.
Hope	That I have been where you've been. I have been through, but I have hope.
Hope, peace, Joy, and Love	A message of hope, faith, and trust in God.
Never give up	Hope, redemption, nothing lasts forever and God will always be on my side.
Hope	That God is ever present and compassionate. That life is hard and troublesome.
Hope, strength, connection, freedom, power, inspiration, joy, direction, and care.	Hope, dedication, inspiration, and faith.
Hope for improvement for our people.	Messages of peace, hope, and belief
Things are going to get better.	Love, strife, good times, hard times. Spirituals take care of all of your feelings that pertain to your life and God.
The spirituals provide positive messages.	Hope, community, strength, peace, guidance, healing, calm, timeless.
The messages are that God will take care of you.	Hope. believing in Christ
Instructions how to live your life in a Godly way. How to treat others.	Can give you peace and hope to face tomorrow and whatever is going on in your life.
Hope	Messages of love, hope, and having faith.
Good ones. They are loving, hope, and forgiving, peaceful messages.	Hope.
Hope for a better future	That you can do all things through Christ.
Trust God, don't give up, stand strong, better days are ahead, look to the hills from which comes your help.	Hope when things seem hopeless, belief that God's will is going to be done.

The journey is never over. Always look to the future.	Hope that things will get better.
Knowing that God is real.	Hope
Hang in there. Things are going to get better.	That there is a balm in Gilead
How we love God. Wanting to be better people. We can depend on God.	We are not alone in this journey, we have a Father who loves and cares for us.
	No matter how hard times are, God will take care of you if you believe.
	A feeling of peace and hope matter what you are going through.
	Hope. God is always with us no matter what we go through. There is always an end to hard times. Better days are always coming.

Data Collection from Focus Group

The focus group gathered comprised of seven individuals from the congregation. The ages of the individuals ranged from fifteen to sixty-five. The researcher wanted the focus group to encompass all of the age groups in the context. The group met to discuss their participation in the sermon series as well as their participation in the pre and post survey. The information provided in this section is only a sample of the meeting. (To read meeting in its entirety, see Appendix C.)

Speaker 1: Interviewee 1, my first question is, uh, what did you think of the preaching series?

Interviewee 1: Um, the series itself I think is, I thought it was good. Um, the, the key was hope and I believe that there is hope, as far as the society today. The young people need to be taught about the spirituals because they really don't know the old time spiritual or, and the meaning behind it.

And that includes my granddaughter. They, of course they know everything you know, but that's maybe once a year, Black History Month. So, there is hope, but they need a lot of teaching.

Speaker 1: Okay. Uh, do you believe that in the preaching series, um, they were able to benefit from the series itself?

Interviewee 1: Honestly, no. Uh, for the young people I'm speaking, not the older people. If they don't know the meaning of what hope and the gospels are about I don't see them benefiting from it. Once again it goes back to the teaching.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewee 1: Uh, interviewee number 3, what did you like best about the series?

Interviewee 3: Um, for what I was there for I did enjoy the preaching series. I personally, my family, my mother and father were like really old school, so they like 70 and older, so 11 of my brothers and sister we all like, we were all in like spirituals and hymns.

We'd sit down at the table every Wednesday and we'd have our devotions and our Bible study, and things like that, and we would have to learn the hymns and the spirituals and everything like that.

And when we didn't understand it my dad would like break it down to us, this means this, this means this, and stuff like that. And one song that we always sung the, um, I think it was a hymn, but I don't know if it was a spiritual "There's a Leak in This Old Building [inaudible 00:02:54].

Um, that's a song we always sung every single time because it was always something going on in our family. We were supposed to be like one tight-knit thing, but it was always something going wrong and it was always a leak. So that was the only song we ... not the only song, but the song we really sung the whole time, like we all knew that song word for word.

So, personally I do agree with Ms. Angie when she said that the young people, like they don't know the songs or they hear the song and they just be like, "Oh, whatever. This is an old song." And if it's not something that they're used to or something that they want to hear then they zone it out. They let it go in one ear and out the other ear.

So if we did have somebody to teach them the songs or make the songs something that they would be more appealing to them then I think that would be more beneficial to them.

Speaker 1: All right, uh, interviewee number 7, what did you like best about the series?

Interviewee 7: Um, I think I just like go over the, um, gospels. I think that was my favorite part. I liked when we like went over the gospels and it's like kind of explaining them a little different, your sermons. It kind of gave me a little bit of a feel for them.

Okay, interviewee number 2, what new information did you gain in reference to the preaching series?

Interviewee 2: I got to learn more about the spirituals, things I didn't know, some of the messages that were in the spirituals that I didn't know. Just like the messages, you know, and the things that was in it I learned a lot of things I didn't know about the spirituals.

Speaker 1: Okay, uh, interviewee number 1, if you had to speak with someone about the hope in messages of the spirituals, uh, what would you say?

Interviewee 1: Um, I honestly don't know. I think it would depend upon that particular time, timing I think not only the timing, but the person, and the young person. If I had to speak to my granddaughter, oh Lord it would be a whole lot. She's a prime example of one of the young people who ... I won't say she don't believe in hope, but she has no patience.

Her timing is always right now. You know, it has to be right now. So, with her not having the patience and I'm not having the patience, I'm, I honestly don't know how to answer that because it do require patience.

Speaker 1: Hmm. uh, number 4 same questions.

Interviewee 4: I'm sorry, could you, could you repeat the question?

Speaker 1: If you had to speak to someone, uh, with someone, uh, about the hope in the messages of the spirituals what would you say?

Interviewee 4: Uh, I would repeat the refrain that, uh, it's a contemporary, um, gospel song and I would just say hold on because I think, I'll just reiterate it, I think that one of the, it's, it's, it's really a consequence of our, of our life in general is that things have, we have seen things in our lifetime I think that we never envisioned having the opportunity to see.

And because of that we falsely interpret that things have speeded up, when in reality a lot of times it's just a tease, you know. You, you, you see something happen here that seems to be fortuitous or, or beneficial to society, but it's just a blip, you know, because then things go back to the same grind daily, you know, um, thankless grind, and you, you question whether well I thought things were turning for the better.

And they're not, you know. It s-, it still requires you to, to put your, you know, your shoulder into it every day and keep moving forward and like I said I think this is a very, um, tumultuous time right now that it would be very easy for us to give up because as, um, number 1 said, you know, a lot of times we have gotten to the point where we're just very impatient.

And so we want instant resolution of things, instant gratification and when it doesn't come we just figure it's nothing there. And so I would just encourage people that if they look back at our ancestry, just our parents generation and our grandparents, and saw and compared their experience to ours, and that wouldn't to them be a small thing-, they wouldn't think of that as a small period of time.

The 50 to 100 years is really not a large leap of time, but if you were to just go back 100 years and see how far we've come 100 years it's tremendous growth, but compared to somebody that's 20 years old, 15 years old, they don't look upon that as a tremendous growth they say that it took a whole 100 years to do that.

Because they're not being reminded about how long the Jews walked through the desert, or how long, you know, it was once we came over here as slaves before we were even considered people. So, I would just continue to tell people to just hold on and hang in there because that's who wins is those that are per-, you know, persistent and that, that endure.

The Result of the Pre and Post Survey

Differences were noted in the closed answers given on the survey versus the open-ended answers. In reference to the close-ended answers, the respondents indicated in Question 9 that they were exposed to Negro Spirituals, yet in question 10 a couple answered none when asked name one and others incorrectly named the Negro Spirituals listed. This information lets the researcher know that the respondents need to be taught the difference between, Negro Spirituals, Hymns, and Gospel. The respondents were then asked if Negro Spirituals are beneficial to pastoral care, and with the exception of one respondent, responded yes to the question and thus provided their responses. The responded believe that the Negro Spirituals would be a benefit to pastoral because of their historical nature, their content, and their connection to the various problems presented in this 21st Century post-modern context. The respondents also believe the messages of the Negro Spirituals would prove to be a benefit based on their rendition, their timelessness, and their ability to provide hope.

The Results Of The Focus Group

The results of the focus group yielded different results based on the research conducted. When speaking to one of the participants, they believed that the older members of the congregation received a benefit from the sermon series, but the younger members need to be taught more on the historical nature of the Negro Spirituals and how they would be beneficial to person living in the 21st Century and beyond. However, when the participant between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine spoke about their interaction with the Negro Spirituals, they were reminded of their family using them when they were growing up. The participant saw a benefit of the Negro Spirituals because of the part the

Negro Spirituals in their life. When the participant between the ages of thirty to thirty-nine spoke about their reaction the Negro Spirituals, they said they would not initially find hope in their messages because of the context out of which they were written. The participant expressed if a concert was held and maybe if the tempo were changed, then maybe they would see the Negro Spirituals in a different light.

John W. Creswell posits in his work *Research Design*," The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data (some qualitative researchers like to think of this as peeling back the layers of an onion), representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data.[1] The data collected through the pre and post survey, the sermon series, and the focus group allowed me to dig deeper into the context in order to get a better understanding of the context as it relates to the hypothesis.

The members of the context and me had both lost hope in life. I regained that hope, not just because of God and the actions of my mother, but also the words of a Negro Spiritual. The research conducted by the researcher based on the surveys, the sermon series and several members of the focus group concluded that hope can be found in the messages of the Negro Spirituals.

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[1]John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oakes, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009), 183.

CHAPTER SIX

Reflection, Summary, and Conclusion

The research methods employed in this project, while beneficial, could have been changed in order to get a better response from the context. When the focus group was held, one of the participants stated that it may have been more beneficial to hold a concert of Negro Spirituals coupled with the survey or a mini workshop. The participant believed that using this method might have peaked the interest of more of the younger members of the context. The participant believed that the context might have benefited more from hearing the music and learning their historical background. The participant said they spend most of the day listening to music when they are not in school, so hearing the Negro Spirituals may have gotten more participants for the project. This information was taken into consideration. Hope can be found in the messages of the spirituals. A concert of the songs with historical information intertwined was suggested but the calendar of the context did not allow the concert to take place.

If this project is repeated, hosting a concert of the Negro Spirituals coupled with the historical context out of which they found meaning would be incorporated. Music, in some ways is part of our everyday lives. This was the case in the lives of the slaves before they were stripped from their homeland and forced to work with little pay and eventually no pay. The slaves used music to expressed everyday events and important life events. The music sang in our churches, automobiles, homes, and places of employment

are used to describe these same types of moments, either in the lives of the writers or some other influence. The music is then internalized and compartmentalized based on the need or situation in the individual's life.

The Negro Spirituals can accomplish the same goal. Many of the songs did have double or "coded" meaning, but they were still able to experience mental freedom even if their bodies were enslaved. The songs of the Negro Spirituals are still alive in the world today and much of today's music has leaned on the Spirituals for instrumentation, lyrics, etc. The words "Negro Spirituals" seem to put persons in a tense state of mind because of the struggle out of which they were written. This is so because at the time of their writing, it was also one of the most horrific times in human history.

Based on the lyrics of some of the songs written during that time, their attention was turned to God and they believed that God was the God to the oppressed, based on their interpretation of the scriptures. This allowed them to endure and to fight back. This allowed the slave to develop survival skills and look out for one another. This allowed the slave to keep their hope alive that things would change, even when their environment said otherwise.

The Negro Spirituals can do the same for person living in the 21st Century. Most people do not have to research a hymn or an anthem in order to appreciate the words of the song. The words of the songs speak to their lives without a dictionary or thesaurus ever being opened, yet the Negro Spirituals seemingly have to be dissected because of the environment out of which they were written. If people took the time to listen to the words of these songs written out of oppression, slavery, and cruelty, one may not be able to tell their nature based on the focus of the songs. This project lifts the Negro Spiritual to be

held in a light where hope can be seen and restored. As mentioned earlier in this project, W. E. B Dubois states, "Through all the sorrow of the Sorrow Songs, there breathes a hope a faith in the ultimate justice of things. The minor cadences of despair change often to triumph and calm confidence."

This project can be replicated because the scriptures, coupled with the words of the Negro Spirituals have the ability to provide hope to those who have no hope and strengthen the hope of those whose hope may be failing. The methodology from chapter four was chosen based on the context and though the expected participation was not reached, the desired results were attained. If this project were replicated and Negro Spirituals were used in another context, other methodologies may be required, i.e., concert, workshops, etc, but the outcome should be the same. The research conducted illuminates hope lifted from the Spirituals and it is the responsibility of the one employing the specific methodology to choose one that would work for their context.

In the AME Church, hope does not have to be lost because leadership changes. Hope does not have to be lost because administration changes. A pastoral appointment in the AME Church only lasts for one year based on the Book of Discipline. After this year is completed, there is a possibility the pastor may get moved, as well as the possibility of the pastor being reassigned to the recent charge. No matter what happens in the life of the church or possible changes in leadership, hope does not have to be lost if the focus is not placed on the transition, but the One that is ultimately in charge of the transition.

APPENDIX A

PRE AND POST SURVEY QUESTIONS

The Message Has Not Changed: Fostering Hope through the Messages of the Spirituals

Good Day All. I would like to say thank you to each and every one of you for taking the time to take this journey with me as we look at the messages of the spirituals in order to foster hope in persons living in this generation. There are several questions listed below. Please answer each question as complete as possible. If you need room, please use the back of this paper. When you are completed, please turn in to one of the context associates. Once again thank you for taking this journey with me through the messages of the spirituals.

1. **Gender** (Circle one) Male Female

2. **Race** (Circle one)

   - Black
   - White
   - Asian
   - American Indian
   - More than One Race
   - Other

3. **Ethnicity** (Circle one) Hispanic Non-Hispanic

4. **Age- Range** CIRCLE ONE BELOW

   (less than 18) (18-29) (30-39) (40-49) (50-59) (60-69) (70-79) (80 and over)

5. **Does music help you cope in difficult times?** Yes No

   If so, what type? _____

6. **Do you believe in God?**
   Yes

   Somewhat

   No

7. **How relevant do you believe music is to a worship experience?**

   Very relevant

   Relevant

   Neutral

Hardly relevant

Not relevant

8. **What is your definition of a Negro Spiritual?**

_____

_____

9. **Have you been exposed to songs that are considered Negro Spirituals?** Yes No

10. **Name a Negro Spiritual you have heard before?** If none, write none.

_____

_____

11. **List three feelings you experience when listening to Negro Spirituals?**

_____

_____

_____

12. **Do you believe the Negro Spirituals are beneficial in pastoral care?** Why or Why not?

_____

_____

13. **How would you define hope?**

_____

_____

14. **Do you think the Negro Spirituals can used as an aid to foster hope in persons in today's society?** If yes, how? If no, why not?

_____

_____

15. **What messages do you believe are sent through Negro Spiritual?**

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE SERMON

There's Hope in the Valley

(Ezekiel 37:1-14)

I. Introduction

A. As a child, I'm reminded of a song called the skeleton dance. The words are the foot bone connected to the leg bone. The leg bone's connected to the knee bone, the knee bone's connected to the thigh bone, doing the skeleton dance. The thigh bone's connected to the hip bone, the hip bone's connected to the back bone, the back bone's connected to the neck bone doing the skeleton dance. This song taught us how the body was put together. This song was sang for fun, but the reality is this song is seen in the spiritual entitled "dry bones." The slaves were literalists in their interpretation of the scriptures, and though this was a vision seen by Ezekiel, the slaves constructed a song depicting the valley of dry bones and power of the Lord.

B. When we look at how the slaves made a connection with the valley of dry bones and their current plight, it is amazing what they saw and heard. The slaves saw the bones coming together when the words were spoken by Ezekiel that came from the Lord. The slaves saw persons standing when the bones were just lying on the ground of the valley when the words were spoken by Ezekiel came from the Lord. The slaves saw life enter a dead situation because of the words that came from Ezekiel that were given by the words. As we meditate this morning, we need to see the power of our when we allow our words to come from the Lord!!!

II. Backdrop

A. The book of Ezekiel is said to have been written by Ezekiel himself. Ezekiel, son the son of Buzi the priest as found in chapter one verse three. It was around this time, in which Ezekiel said the hand of the Lord was upon him. This prophetical book contains three prophecies, through study and research. The first prophecy deals with the denunciation of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem, in opposition to the words of the false

prophets. The second prophecy deals with prophecies with several of their surrounding neighbors and third, the prophecy delivered after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the triumphs of Israel and the kingdom of God on earth. Ezekiel has visions as to the work of God in the lives of the Israelites.

B. We are situated in the thirty-seventh chapter of this prophetical work. This vivid picture of a valley draws one's mind to a place of a valley filled with dry bones. The hand of the Lord was upon Ezekiel, and the Spirit of the Lord led him to the middle of a valley. This meant there must have been mountains to his left and mountains to his right and the spirit took him to a dark, desolate place full of bones. And not only was Ezekiel led by the Spirit of the Lord into a valley full of bones, he was led back and forth among them, which suggests there was time that was spent in the valley, yet it must not be missed that Ezekiel was not by himself.

C. This morning we find ourselves connected with a vision of Ezekiel finding himself in a dark, desolate place, a dead situation, in between two places that would normally be seen as places of victory; mountains! But here, Ezekiel does not find himself at the bottom of a grassy, plush and comfortable mountain. He is placed in a place that would normally be seen as a place of death, a place of despair, and a place of destruction. This valley is full of bones and Ezekiel is forced to walk among the bones, spend time with the bones, and interact with the bones. This vision would cause question as to why would this be a place chosen as a place of vision. Why would this place to chosen as a vision given to Ezekiel. This place is given to Ezekiel for several reasons in order to provide a bridge to those living in the twenty-first century. This vision shows several aspects of life when the Lord is involved in our situations. The first aspect shown is the importance of following instructions. This is necessary in order to survive in the valley. The second aspect shown is the importance of our words. Our words have power, especially when our words come from the Lord!

The third aspect shown in the importance of hope in dead situations. This valley was full of dry bones of those who had gone before Ezekiel, yet God uses this vision to show Ezekiel and us that things aren't always what they seem when the Lord is involved in the situation.

III. The Importance of Following Instruction

A. Here we find Ezekiel in a valley and the Lord asks a question to Ezekiel in the midst of the bones. The Lord asks, "Can these bones lives?" Ezekiel's answer was not a yes or no answer. This answer was not in a gray area. This answer given was "Lord, you alone know." This answer shows the trust Ezekiel showed in the Lord, even in the midst of a dry and desolate point in this vision. We have to get to the point when our situations don't dictate the trust we have in the Lord, if we truly believe that the Lord is with us, no matter the situation. Our situation should not determine how we respond to the Lord in the midst of our trouble. If we believe that the Lord is with us, then if the Lord asks us a question in our time of trouble, then we should believe that the Lord already has the answer and all we have to do is fall in line and believe that the Lord can either get us out of our trouble, or give us the strength to deal in the trouble, therefore we should not be moved when we are either in trouble, or trouble is on our doorstep, because only the Lord knows what is going to happen next.

B. Ezekiel was given specific instructions in this vision of being in the valley. Several times is Ezekiel told to prophesy to the bones in the valley. This does not show doubt in the mind of Ezekiel. This does not show fear in the actions of Ezekiel. This does not show hesitation on the part of Ezekiel. Ezekiel is shown following the instruction, even though trouble seemed to be on every side. He was led to walk around in the trouble and the Lord gave him instruction. Ezekiel was in the midst of walking around in the results of those who were disobedient to the commands of the Lord.

C. When we are in our situations, there may be times we are led to walk around in our situations. There may be times we are forced to spend some time, even though we may not like it, in a terrible situation. My question is, "What will we do? Will we succumb to the dark and desolate place where we may find ourselves at that time in our lives? Will we wallow in self-pity? Will we think of all of past decisions and sulk because of the place we may find ourselves? Or will we take a page out of Ezekiel's vision and recognize that what is impossible with man is possible with God? Will we follow the Lord's instruction even when our situations seem bleak? Will we follow the Lord's instruction even when find ourselves in the valleys of our lives? Will we put what we are going through in the Lord's hands and let the Lord work our situation out? Ezekiel shows that even if we find ourselves in a valley full of bones, bones of despair, bones of desolation, bones of debt, bones of sickness, bones of struggle, and bones of hopelessness, that the Lord already knows how our situation is going to end, how things are going to turn around and all we have to do is follow his instructions!

IV. The Importance of our Words

A. When Ezekiel was given instructions, he was told to prophesy to the bones. Ezekiel saw the power of his words when they were covered with the power of God. The situation Ezekiel found himself showed him how to follow the commands of God to the letter and speak what the Lord gave him to speak.

B. When we find ourselves in precarious situations, the first thing we have to recognize that we are not by ourselves. We have to believe that no matter how bad situation may seem to be, the Lord is still with us. When we feel like we are knee deep in bones, we are covered up to our eyes in issues, the Lord is with us. The word tells us we will never be left or forsaken, and because the promises of God are yea and amen, we can take God at God's word. We can speak to our situations when the Lord gives us the

words to speak. There are those among us who get quiet when we go through. We don't want to say anything. We don't want to open our mouths. It's in Proverbs where the scripture tells us that death and life are in the power of the tongue and they that love it shall eat the fruit there of. This means that our words have power. Our words have the power to build up and the power to destroy. Our words have the power to edify and encourage and the power to kill. Our words, in some ways can hit just as hard as fists! There are times when we can remember what a person says easier than what a person did to us. Our mind can remember it just like it was yesterday. Some have not moved forward in life because of what was said to them twenty years ago. Some have lost friends because of a few ill-placed words. Some have been stuck in the same level in life because of the words spoken. What would happen if we started speaking in the positive? What would happen if our words were used to bless instead? The book of James tells how when bits are put in the mouth of a horse, the direction of a horse can be changed. He then tells of how the rudder of a ship steers the whole ship. A bit and a rudder have the power to give direction. The tongue can corrupt the whole person, according to James and set the course of his life on fire.

C. We need to learn how to speak life into a situation and believe that the life can be given in situation. Sometimes we are our own worst enemy. We talk ourselves out of promotions. We talk ourselves out of negotiations. We talk ourselves out of good relationships. We talk ourselves out of living the way God intended and therefore we have become our own worst enemy. But I want to suggest that if we want things to change in our lives, we must begin to speak like we want things to change in our lives. If we want things to be different, we need to start talking like it. If we want things to turn around, we have to start talking like it. Let's stop speaking negativity. Let's stop looking at the proverbial glass have empty. Let's saying that we can't make it. Let's stop saying things won't change. Let's stop saying life can't get any better. Let's stop saying we don't know how

we are going to make it out. Our ears hear what we speak. Therefore, let's speak those things as though they were. We want to survive a situation, let's tell ourselves, that we shall not die, but we shall live. It is out of the heart that the mouth speaks. When we get ourselves to a place in our lives when we rely on God in our situations, we can speak to the mountain and the mountain will move. When we rely on God in our situation, our words can change the direction of someone else's life. Someone needs to hear they can make it. Someone needs to hear trouble won't last always. Someone needs to hear a kind word. Someone needs to hear the Lord still love them. Someone needs to hear the Lord is still working on their behalf. Someone needs to hear that when they call on Jesus, he is there and will be there to see about them. We just have to remember that the Bible tells us that when we call him, he will answer. We just have to remember that our words have power!

V. The Importance of Hope in Dead Situations

A. Ezekiel sees how the bones have come together, the tendons have joined the bones together, the muscles have surrounded the bones, and the bones are not standing like an army and are yet still in the valley. The four winds have come together, and those were slain and found in the valley were now found to be alive. This took place in a seemingly dead situation. This took place in a place that didn't warrant a way out. This took place to show the Lord was in control and Ezekiel did what was commanded. The Israelites, according to verse eleven have stated how their bones were dried up and their hope was lost. The Israelites were in captivity and did not see light at the end of their proverbial tunnel. The Israelites did not think their situation was going to get any better. The Israelites found themselves in a hopeless situation. But someone needs to know that we can have hope, even when all hope seems lost.

B. The bones that were once dead are now alive. The bones that were once scattered were now brought back together. The bones that were lying on the ground of the valley were now standing as an army. The bones were now living when they were once dead. This all came about because of the Lord still being involved in human affairs. This came about because of God being true to God's word. This came about because of the restorative power of God. Therefore, we are shown that even in a valley like situation we cannot give up hope. We can't give into our situation because God is with us. We can't give ourselves over to our minds because the Lord is with us. We can't life without hope because we serve the God of hope and this should give hope. Hope that things can turn around hope. Hope that things can get better. Hope that things can iron themselves out. Hope that trouble won't last. Hope that the storm won't last. The valley was a place where God was active when all hope seems lost. The valley was a place where God made the impossible possible. The valley was a place trust can be put in God and not in our outward circumstances. This suggests that we can still have hope in the valley. We can still have hope when hope seems lost. We can still have hope when our situation looks deadly. We can still have hope when our circumstances may forces to throw in the towel, to give up, and give in. We can still have hope when we are led to walk around in a dead situation. We can still have hope and know that God can work in the valley. God can give strength in the valley. God can cause us to flourish in the valley. God can restore hope in the valley. God can strengthen our faith in the valley. God can pull things together in the valley. God can straighten things out in the valley. God can give life in the valley. Just like David, we may find ourselves in the valley, but don't have to fear evil because the Lord is with us. We can find comfort in the valley because the Lord is with us. We can find trust in the valley because the Lord is with us. We can find assurance in the valley because the Lord is with us. We can find joy in the valley because the Lord is with us. We can find mercy in the valley because the Lord is with us. We can find grace in

the valley because the Lord is with us. We can have victory in the valley because the Lord is with us.

VI. Conclusion

A. Christa Dixon in her work *Negro Spirituals: From Bible to Folksong,* she states, " as the Christian tradition repeatedly transferred the expectation of the promised land from a the geopolitical to the spiritual level, reinterpreting Israel's pilgrimage from Egyptian slavery through the desert into Canaan as the prototype for each individual on his or her pilgrimage through the various hardships of life on earth to the glorious heavenly land, so the expectation of a new rebuilt Jerusalem following the return from captivity was transferred to a heavenly new Jerusalem in which the individual would live after death. " She further states, Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones became in this figurative interpretation the prime illustration for the resurrection of the body, confidently expected for the end of time at Christ's return for judgment and final salvation. This spiritual "dry bones," according to Dixon commands discouraged fellow travelers who are ready to slim down at the wayside to rise and hear the word of the Lord. It encourages those who are ready to give in, to accept the word of the Lord, and you will survive hard times.

B. Ezekiel is showing us in his vision that no matter what plagues our lives, if it slavery, sickness, heard, loneliness, fear, hopelessness, that the power of the Lord can change any situation. Ezekiel is showing us that the word of the Lord can change the very direction of our lives. Ezekiel is showing us that the Lord can give life in dead situations. Ezekiel is showing that the spirit of the Lord can move when all hope seems lost. Ezekiel is showing that we can accept the word of the Lord is true and watch God work in our lives. Ezekiel is showing that the word of the Lord can transform despair into hope. Ezekiel is showing that the word of the Lord can transferred desolation into deliverance. Ezekiel is showing that the word of the Lord can set the captives free. Ezekiel is showing that the word of the Lord can

give strength to the weak. Ezekiel is showing that with the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty and freedom even in the valley. So as we pay attention to the words that come out of our mouths, we need to recognize that our words have power. Just like the bits in the mouths of horses, the rudders connected to ships and the spark that can set an entire forest ablaze, our words have the power of change the course of someone's day immediately and the power to change the course of someone's life eventually. We have to see the words spoken in the vision of Ezekiel brought bodies back together with the power of the Lord. We have to see that the words spoken in the vision of Ezekiel created a vast army with the power of the Lord. We have to see the words spoken in the vision of Ezekiel gave life in the dead situation with the power of the Lord. People of God, our words have power, especially when the words are directed by the Lord. Families can be mended by the words that we use. Lives can be changed by the words that we use. Yolks can be broken by the words that we use. Hope can be restored by the words that we use. Faith can be strengthened by the words that we use. Situations can be straightened by the words that we use. Ezekiel showed the power of words when coupled with the power of God in a dark and desolate situation and it's high time we recognize that our words have power when coupled with the power of the Lord.

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP MEETING

Speaker 1: Interviewee 1, my first question is, uh, what did you think of the preaching series?

Interviewee 1: Um, the series itself I think is, I thought it was good. Um, the, the key was hope and I believe that there is hope, as far as the si-, society today. The young people need to be taught about the spirituals because they really don't know the old time spiritual or, and the meaning behind it.

And that includes my granddaughter. They, of course they know [inaudible 00:00:55], you know, but that's maybe once a year, Black History Month. So, there is hope, but they need a lot of teaching.

Speaker 1: Okay. Uh, do you believe that in the preaching series, um, they were able to benefit from the series itself?

Interviewee 1: Honestly, no. Uh, for the young people I'm speaking, not the older people. If they don't know the meaning of what hope and the gospels are about I don't see them benefiting from it. Once again it goes back to the teaching.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewee 1: Uh, interviewee number 3, what did you like best about the series?

Interviewee 3: Um, for what I was there for I did enjoy the preaching series. I personally, my family, my mother and father were like really old school, so they like 70 and older, so 11 of my brothers and sister we all like, we were all in like spirituals and hymns.

We'd sit down at the table every Wednesday and we'd have our devotions and our Bible study, and things like that, and we would have to learn the hymns and the spirituals and everything like that.

And when we didn't understand it my dad would like break it down to us, this means this, this means this, and stuff like that. And one song that we always sung the, um, I think it was a hymn, but I don't know if it was a spiritual "There's a Leak In This Old Building [inaudible 00:02:54].

Um, that's a song we always sung every single time because it was always something going on in our family. We was supposed to be like one tight-knit thing, but it was always something going wrong and it was always a leak. So that was the only song we ... not the only song, but the song we really sung the whole time, like we all knew that song word for word.

So, personally I do agree with Ms. Angie when she said that the young people, like they don't know the songs or they hear the song and they just be like, "Oh, whatever. This is a old song." And if it's not something that they're used to or something that they want to hear then they zone it out. They let it go in one ear and out the other ear.

So if we did have somebody to teach them the songs or make the songs something that they would be more appealing to them then I think that would be more beneficial to them.

Speaker 1: All right, uh, interviewee number 7, what did you like best about the series?

Interviewee 7: Um, I think I just like go over the, um, gospels. I think that was my favorite part. I liked when we like went over the gospels and it's like kinda explaining them a little different, your sermons. It kinda gave me a little bit of a feel for them [inaudible 00:04:05].

Speaker 1: Okay. Interviewee number 5, what new information did you gain in reference to the preaching series?

Interviewee 5: Oh, mmm, I'm sorry. Um, I learned that even though that I'm young and that I go through a lot God is still there no matter what happens or what people say about me.

Speaker 1: Okay. Uh, interviewee number 6, if you had to speak with someone else about hope and the messages of the spirituals, which is this evening's topic, what would you say?

Interviewee 6: Um, well one being it was always hard for me to see hope in spirituals. Um, the Bible [inaudible 00:05:17] different reason. So if I had to, um, I would probably tell me to really kind of draw inspiration from people who really suffered a lot.

So it would help put in perspective their own suffering so that they can have hope that these were people who suffered quite a bit, but still [inaudible 00:05:42] so there's a, there's a purpose in the suffering that you may experience.

Um, so if I had to I would probably try to highlight that aspect of it. Um, but it probably wouldn't be the first thing. Hope probably wouldn't be the first thing to come to mind, just because of how I relate to the spirituals, and, um, if I had to teach someone about it.

Speaker 1: Uh, interviewee number 4, uh, what did you like least about the series?

Interviewee 4: It wasn't anything that happened or that was preached during the series, it was the I guess the, um, interpretation of the messages that, um, were discussed post sermon and as we are discussing today. I think that, um, we are somewhat hypocritical as a group, not any one, I'm not pointing anybody in particular, but I think I included, and it is something that I have been, that has been on my, um, plate most recently, um, regarding our, um, our hopes for the young.

And I say that to say that we expect them, or we, we we, yearn for them to recognize the light or to see the light, but we're not patient in waiting for that. In the same week, we expect them to hurry up and see the light when we realize and should understand that is requires patience.

And I think that's the devil's, um, hole card, his ace card as they call 'em, that he's keeping in his deck is that he's counting on us to lose faith and lose hope and to stop teaching when in reality at, at a time like this when things are in very tenuous times, it's incumbent upon us as Christians to be willing to go the extra yard and to hang in there.

And to continue to teach them because reality is that if they are of the right mind and of the right heart eventually they will, um, uh, prove us to be, um, to have been correct in our teaching and in our focus.

Speaker 1: Okay, interviewee number 2, what new information did you gain in reference to the preaching series?

Interviewee 2: I got to learn more about the spirituals, things I didn't know, some of the messages that were in the spirituals that I didn't know. Just like the messages, you know, and the things that was in it I learned a lot of things I didn't know about the spirituals.

Speaker 1: Okay, uh, interviewee number 1, if you had to speak with someone about the hope in messages of the spirituals, uh, what would you say?

Interviewee 1: Um, I honestly don't know. I think it would depend upon that particular time, timing I think. Not only the timing, but the person, the young person. If I had to speak to my granddaughter, oh Lord it would be a whole lot. She's a prime example of one of the young people who ... I won't say she don't believe in hope, but she has no patience.

Her timing is always right now. You know, it has to be right now. So, with her not having the patience and I'm not having the patience, I'm, I honestly don't know how to answer that because it do require patience.

Speaker 1: Hmm. Uh, number 4 same question.

Interviewee 4: I'm sorry, could you, could you repeat the question?

Speaker 1: If you had to speak to someone, uh, with someone, uh, about the hope in the messages of the spirituals what would you say?

Interviewee 4: Uh, I would repeat the refrain that, uh, it's a contemporary, um, gospel song and I would just say hold on because I think, I'll just reiterate it, I think that one of the, it's, it's, it's really a consequence of our, of our life in general is that things have, we have seen things in our lifetime I think that we never envisioned having the opportunity to see.

And because of that we falsely interpret that things have speeded up, when in reality a lot of times it's just a tease, you know. You, you, you see something happen here that seems to be fortuitous or, or beneficial to society, but it's just a blip, you know, because then

things go back to the same grind daily, you know, um, thankless grind, and you, you question whether well I thought things were turning for the better.

And they're not, you know. It s-, it still requires you to, to put your, you know, your shoulder into it every day and keep moving forward and like I said I think this is a very, um, tumultuous time right now that it would be very easy for us to give up because as, um, number 1 said, you know, a lot of times we have gotten to the point where we're just very impatient.

And so we want instant resolution of things, instant gratification and when it doesn't come we just figure it's nothing there. And so I would just encourage people that if they look back at our ancestry, just our parents generation and our grandparents, and saw and compared their experience to ours, and that wouldn't to them be a sma-, the wouldn't think of that as a small period of time.

The 50 to 100 years is really not a large leap of time, but if you were to just go back 100 years and see how far we've come 100 years it's tremendous growth, but compared to somebody that's 20 years old, 15 years old, they don't look upon that as a tremendous growth they say that it took a whole 100 years to do that.

Because they're not being reminded about how long the Jews walked through the desert, or how long, you know, it was once we came over here as slaves before we were even considered people. So, I would just continue to tell people to just hold on and hang in there because that's who wins is those that are per-, you know, persistent and that, that endure.

Speaker 1: Uh, interviewee number 5, do you believe there are benefits if this project were done in another church?

Interviewee 5: I believe I would say no because, if I understand the question right, young people are like we all think the same so I wouldn't see the big difference between us and [inaudible 00:13:48].

Speaker 1: Number 6, same question. Do you believe the, do you believe if this project was done in another church, same preaching series, same surveys, uh, do you think it would be beneficial?

Interviewee 6: I'm trying to think. I don't know about beneficial. [inaudible 00:14:28] interesting. Um, I would love to know, you know, what other people thought across the gamut of like we have, you know, different generations here, but I'd also like to know, you know, what people even thought about just having to do the surveys.

You know, things like that. So I don't know so much about beneficial, as much as interesting to kind of get where people ... in order for someone or someone like you who's interested in this work to really kind of see where, how people have thought about the spirituals.

To see if providing more information or putting into context, um, the helping them try to understand the spirituals from perhaps a different perspective than what they had before may be useful to them. Um, I can see how that could potentially be, but I'm still trying to figure out beneficial in what say. So how would it be of use to their lives.

How could we make, how could it be something that they could see as something that they can use. [inaudible 00:15:31] thinking about me particularly, I listened to them for like I don't know. I didn't have an interest until I was like 20.

So, listening to them what they provided for me was something different then because I kind of picked up on it when I was in college. I would listen, I would read up on it. Like I would research anything else that I was interested in.

So in that kind of way that piqued my interest and I'm wondering if this same this project if in some kind of way it could, for the population of people with [inaudible 00:16:01] have so many, we have quite a bit of diversity, particularly in age and other characteristics, education and things like that.

I'm wondering if there are ways in which it could be brought to each group's level in a way that, for it can be beneficial to them in different ways. Um, so as is, probably to some, but I wonder if, if taken apart and broken up into different things and other things added if it would be beneficial to more [inaudible 00:16:31].

Speaker 1: Number 7, interviewee number 7, what did you like least about the series?

Interviewee 7: Um, honestly I kinda like the series. I don't know what I, I don't really finding anything I disliked about the series, you know.

Speaker 1: Okay. Interviewee number 3, [inaudible 00:17:16] word this, would you take part in this project again? Would you take part in this project again if you were, for lack of a better phrase, given a choice in a sense of the preaching series itself?

Interviewee 3: [inaudible 00:17:51].

Speaker 1: Why?

Interviewee 3: I, I think that I would where I'm saying that I wouldn't 'cuz everybody goes through their little things and everything, like in generations, like everything has been recycled from clothes to music, everything.

So, the songs that I'm listening to nowadays that I dance, that I'm sitting here listening to when I'm on my phone and crying, they were taken from spirituals. They were derived from spirituals. So every message that was in the songs that I listened to today they were in those songs in the '60s and those songs when slavery existed.

All of that, I think it all goes down the same line, and it's like 1 song back then somebody made a new song, it's the same exact words, has the same exact meaning it's just an up tempo beat, and then today is it's the same exact words, same exact meaning, it's just a faster beat or a slower beat or a more common beat.

So, it's [inaudible 00:18:47].

Speaker 1: Uh, I actually do not have any more questions at this time. Does anyone else want to add anything to what has been discussed, uh, tonight?

Interviewee 4: I wanted to say I think she made a, a, interviewee number 3 made a very good point just now about the continuity of music within our community and to me that offers one more reason to, to hold out

hope is that I can remember songs that I heard as a child at [Joan's 00:19:32] Tabernacle where my godmother used to take me that when I came back and got saved and started going to [inaudible 00:19:41] songs started playing.

I just started mouthing and before I knew it I was singing and I couldn't even realize that I had remembered it for 20 years. And I think that that is in each of us. You know, whether it, as long as it's, you know, my father used to take me to the [inaudible 00:19:58] and make, force me to listen to Duke Ellington, you know, and I'd go there, "Man I can't believe this man is making me listen to this guy."

Not realizing what he was doing. And as I got older I came to appreciate it. And I think that that's part of our challenge now is that we spend a lot of time wondering whether we're doing the right thing because we still want to, like she said, the co-, music is continuous.

The challenges in presenting to young are continuous. Those, the same, uh, uh, excuses and, and complaints that children put up today about having to listen to music are the same ones that we offered to our parents, the same ones our parents offered to our grandparents.

And we approach it differently I think is that our, our desire now is to be closer to our youth and not to offend them. And in doing so we're depriving them. [Billy Grand 00:20:48] said something about we fail to discipline our children and we call it, um, giving them character or something like that.

It was a, it was a statement he made and it, it referred to the fact that we, we, we tend to want to be so considered a friend to our young, as opposed to a teacher and you can't be both.

Speaker 1: That was interviewee number 4. This is now interviewee number 6 speaking.

Interviewee 6: So, you just reminded me of something I was thinking about earlier when someone was speaking in a way that kinda relate ... I still find it very challenging to try to relate spirituals to young people.

And like particularly, like the history of the past of it it's very, it can be slow, it can sound kind of [inaudible 00:21:37], I know like I think in both the surveys I wrote about when I think about spirituals when I hear them I think of sadness, I think of grief, I think of suffering, and when I want to feel happy I'm not gonna listen to something that makes me think of sadness and grief and suffering.

I'm just not going to (laughter), but if that's how I'm feeling I'm going to listen to some spirituals. So, like, I'm wondering how do you then convince a group of people such as young people to see value in that, you know. When, with something that can seem so full of sadness.

Say like, you know, well this is powerful, you know, our people made it. I'm still not gonna listen to it, you know, to necessarily receive, to feel better, particularly about my situation. [inaudible 00:22:11] wonderful young people I'm thinking about, you know, like your granddaughter, like what would be her motivation to be interested in it.

Like from the perspective of, you know, seeing [inaudible 00:22:23] in it I wonder. I'm just, so that's just something that runs through my head. Like I could see it maybe for other generations, but for the young in particular like I have a hard time really seeing it.

Speaker 1: Okay, this is interview nu-, interviewee number 1 speaking.

Interviewee 1: Um, to answer your question as for my granddaughter she really likes Dr. King, and anything that comes on, anything comes on about him she's glued to the TV, but her main thought is I couldn't be back in that day.

And I think most of the young people feel that way. She was, they would just have to kill me because I, I just wouldn't do that. You not putting no dogs on me. You're not doing this. Not fully understanding what was go-, what was actually going on at that particular time.

Interviewee 6: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee 1: When it comes to the spirituals the first day that, that Sunday that you passed out the survey when we got home she said to me, "I really didn't know how to answer some of the questions." I said, "Well, you just answer to the best of your ability." She said, "Well that's why I didn't even turn mine in." She didn't even turn it in.

So I said, "Well let me take a look at it." For a couple of, uh, one of the, um, questions and I don't even remember which one it was on the back side her answer was calm to whatever question that was, I don't remember it.

I think one of the questions referred to how do it make you feel or something, she put sad.

Interviewee 6: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee 1: Makes me cry. I'm like, "Well you should've turned it in." Because that's what, that was the purpose of it to, to see how you felt. She was like, "Well, no (laughter)." Once again, no patience. No, um, I won't say that she don't understand, but she's a fighter.

Interviewee 6: All right.

Interviewee 1: It's, you know, it's real hard to, I mean she's young and she's just not, they don't see it the way we see it. They haven't felt, they ... I'm not gonna say the young people haven't been hurt, but the hurt that they feel is nothing like what I, my generation went through and the generation before me.

So they really don't understand it.

Speaker 1: Interviewee number 4.

Interviewee 4: I was gonna add to interview number 6 in res-, somewhat in response to her question about, um, how do you relate this, this to younger individuals. I don't think it's so much our duty to ... I think our obligation is to present it to 'em because quite honestly as y-, generation wise, throughout history, a lot of young people have not experienced at various stages the, the trauma that, um, the spirituals would provide a bond for.

But because they have been exposed to them they ha-, to me it's like teaching somebody first aid. You don't wait until they get cut to teach them first aid. You teach them first aid up front, and then when they have an accident they know what to do.

Um, when, when, when I learned, uh, a lot of spirituals if they were to ask me if this, um, survey had been done back in 1964 I would've wrote this is, I know this, I'm happy because I know right after I finish this imma go to [inaudible 00:26:36] Ice Cream and we're gonna go to Smith playground (laughter).

That would've been my answer because that's what I associate it with, but I think that our duty is to expose them and to keep that historical connection going and that eventually when it is ne-, when they need it it'll be there for them to make that connection and then it will, it'll be almost like a circuit is completed because then they'll understand just like the, the spiritual that goes you'll understand it better by and by.

You're not gonna know everything in the beginning, but eventually if you've been given the, the, um, the what they call the ...

Interviewee 3: ... Foundation.

Interviewee 4: Uh, foundation eventually it'll click and you'll go ah-ha.

Interviewee 6: You said that ...

Speaker 1: ... Interviewee 3.

Interviewee 6: I'm sorry, go ahead.

Speaker 1: 3.

Interviewee 3: Um, question. I, well first my opinion. I think that that would be close to impossible, not say-, 'cuz, not even, I'm not [inaudible 00:27:33] me like I don't, a lot of people that's my, in my generation they still would sit there and look at the spirituals and just be like yeah whatever, but because of like some people background they'll like take heed to it, but like my generation and people under me they're so grounded in the status quo that they're

like so used to everything that they see and they want, they don't want anything to change.

They're not used to change. They don't want change. They fear change. So, how are you supposed to present something like that to my age and under and expect them to just take heed to it?

Interviewee 4: Uh, number 4 speaking, I don't, like I said, I don't expect them to change now. All I'm trying to do, in other words if somebody tells you something you might not agree with it and you might not even, um, uh, introduce it into your daily, you know, uh, um, operation.

But as long as you heard it and you file it away, as long as it's in there it's in there. And at some point down the road, you know, possibly it will become useful to you. It's the same thing ... there's things that you learned in regular school that you don't really, you don't really grasp them. You don't really, you know, understand them sometimes, but you just file it away.

And your mind is such that it has the capacity to hold on to things that you, um, that you have heard or have been, um, uh, been indoctrinated in and it'll just file 'em away in the long-term memory.

And all it takes is the correct stimulus to come along to, to, to, um, bring it out. I'm not saying that I, I agree that you're not gonna change a young person's, uh, mindset or anything because it's a young person's mindset.

And spirituals really, my interpretation of spirituals is that in today's, um, lifestyle it's not about the average young person. There are some young people that would benefit as young people because of their experience, but for the average young African-American kid it's not gonna, it's not gonna take root right now.

But as long as they've been made aware of it at some point guarantee at some point down the road it's gonna have some utility in your life and that's, that's my point is to try to just get it into them.

Not that, not that they have to even acknowledge that it's useful.

Interviewee 3: 'Cuz then that makes it seem like they would have to go to some kind of, go through some time of, some type of traumatic experience in order for it to click in your head and I don't think it should be that way. I think that like you, you say something one minute, like you're 15 you say something about the spirituals they like "Okay, whatever mom."

And then later on down the line they best, they see their best friend get shot and they looking at their best friend dead and they like "Oh, well my mom did say ...", like why would you have to go through something like that in order for something, in order for a spiritual to click. Like I don't think it sh- ...

Interviewee 4: ... I don't think it ha-, it doesn't, it doesn't have to be a negative experience. It just has to be an experience that relates to that the spiritual brought out. If the spiritual, if the spiritual is about having hope and you're going through, let's say you're in school and you're having trouble, you're in your dorm ...

... I was in my, let me give a personal, uh, um, testimony, I was in my dorm and I had to come home because my grandmother the [inaudible 00:30:54] that I'm related to the neighborhood by died right after 3-mile island back in 1978.

I had just come home for Easter and I went back to school. I'm already about a week behind in classes and I'm a double bio and chem major. And I come back home, I mean I come back to school, the day I get back my mother tells me, "My mother died you gotta come home."

Came back home. I tried to come back to school 3-mile island happens so I can't get out, so I'm outta school for like 2, 3 weeks, I get back the teachers tell me there's hardly any chance you're gonna graduate on time.

And I'm sitting there in my room crying, thinking oh my God I've been going to college for 3 years and now I'm gonna flunk. And I'm sitting there just shivering and, you know, just whining and everything, and all of a sudden a voice just starts saying "You'll understand it better by and by."

And I just start, I'm like wait, you know, what's going on here and I just started laughing. And a voice just says, "If this is the worst it could be you should [inaudible 00:32:01] right now because you're gonna make it."

And I tru-, literally got on my knees right then, started praying, I went to my professors told them what the situation was and, guess what, all during my finals I'm humming, I'm humming I'll understand it better by and by. I needed a 96 to get a B so that I would qualify to pass with a double major and I got a 97.

There's no way I would've gotten it if I hadn't have remembered, I don't think, those spirituals that my godmother and my mother took me and, and made me aware of. And I didn't need it all this other time, I had made it through school, made it through life, had no problems. Now that was a traumati-, it was traumatic, but it wasn't life-threatening, okay?

If I had of flunked out what's the worst could happen? I would've had to go somewhere else. I would've had to get a regular job. So it wasn't that somebody died or that, but it was something that it, it shook me to my roots let's put it that way.

You know, I don't think it's something that you have to, you have to see somebody horrifically dismembered in front of you, but it could be, I mean basically people a lot of times don't go to God until something bad has happened. When things are going great people, people tend to think that it's them, it's not God. They go, "Oh, I'm fine I don't need him right now."

You know that's true. So usually when you, when the spirituals were written, you gotta remember the spirituals weren't written in a time when we was kings and queens. We were slaves so it's gonna be, it's gonna come out in a time when there's a need.

It doesn't have to, you know, tragic, but it usually is so-, you need God. Now we need him all the time, but I'm just saying that I think it's possible that you can make that, um, you can invest that time in the young person's life and, you know, infuse it into them so that when they, when it's needed it's there for them to come out.

It's like giving somebody a vaccination [inaudible 00:33:56].

Speaker 1: Interviewee number 5.

Interviewee 5: Personally, if I don't know what a spiritual is about I'm not gonna apply it to my life. So if nobody every taught what this hidden message is in the spiritual was I'm not going to just sit in my room and just think about hope from a song that I know nothing about.

So like if somebody actually teaches the young people about what like what's going on maybe they would understand and apply it to life. It's not just that they don't wanna hear it it's that, the fact that nobody every taught them (laughter).

Speaker 1: So this goes (laughs), this goes out to anyone that can answer the question or that would like to answer the question. And, uh, this is the final question of the night, um, what could be, if anything, uh, could be added to this project as a whole from the surveys to the preaching series and even to this, uh, focus group, um, to make it better, um, if anything?

Or, you know, what could be added if ... interviewee number 2 looks like he wants to say.

Interviewee 2: Um, knowledge. I feel like this whole thing is all about knowledge. From her age to ...

Speaker 1: ... Who's her?

Interviewee 2: Number 5 (laughter), from 5 to interview number 4 age I just feel like it's all knowledge, just knowing what they need, what they come from, how to relate to it, what they, what they have to do it, all of that. I just feel like it's all knowledge.

I agree with everything you were saying [inaudible 00:35:43] about teaching it now and it may come back later because they all are over hundreds of years old, from slavery times, but in some type of way all of us know at least 1 if anything. So I do agree that it will, if you teach it, it will like come back out eventually.

Speaker 1: Number 7 do you think anything could've been added to the, to the project as a whole?

Interviewee 7: Um, well for people in my age group 13 and all like yeah my generation, um, I think we could like make a better connection if you like compare the s-, like the, um, the spirituals to the music that like, the gospel songs we listen to nowadays that are played on the radio and you like compare them together, maybe they kinda, could've helped us grasp the concept a little more maybe.

Speaker 1: Number 5.

Interviewee 5: I agree with what number 2 said, but I think that somebody should have a class and teach the young people, but I think the parents should like make them come because I [inaudible 00:36:51] somebody told me "Oh, we're gonna have a lesson about [inaudible 00:36:56] spirituals."

Speaker 1: Number 4.

Interviewee 4: I was gonna say, uh, I was gonna suggest that maybe, you know, we could, uh, introduce something on a weekly basis at the minister music, you know, while, while the choir is, uh, in the process of presenting a, uh, you know, an older spiritual. They could just give us a, uh, a history of that particular, you know, a quick history of that particular spiritual and on the same type of format that we do during, uh, February when we go into detail about African, you know, African-American history.

Perhaps a 2 or 3-minute background on spirituals would be stimulating enough that it would either encourage somebody to look far-, you know, further in terms of that particular spiritual or at least be adequate to give the listener, um, a different context on which to hear the spiritual and maybe relate it to it's, to it's origin. And put it in a different perspective for, you know, for the listener.

Interviewee 6: Um, I know while number 5 ...

Speaker 1: ... This is number 6 (laughs).

Interviewee 6: I'm sorry, I'm number 6. While number 5 just gave her last response I was thinking of like, I'm thinking [inaudible 00:38:14] may not or some young people may not [inaudible 00:38:15] I

probably wouldn't come either, even though I might have an interest in it.

Um, [inaudible 00:38:19] something like a lesson or a workshop on learning more about the spirituals, but if it's something about the rich roots of church music, like if it's hyped up in a different kind of way. A concert [crosstalk 00:38:30]. Like I love, and one thing, like I love A capella music. And I know, I love to hear spirituals A capella without music to hear like, to feel it, to stomp and clap along, to have more of the call and response with it.

If there is some kind of way you can tap that, those elements could be tapped into and given a highlight to kind of interest, I feel like that would be kinda cool. Even if it's like, I'm thinking about something like put in with like a step team or something to get the, to make it more engaging and relatable.

Interviewee 5: Please.

Interviewee 6: Like that's something I could totally (laughter) see. And, and then say like, you know, this is so similar to, you know, that song that you probably tune out on Sundays that we sing to the organ or whatever, 'cuz that's why I used to do when I was young.

You know, see how these are really kinda similar in the same kinda way it's just you're doing it in a different way and back then, you know, slaves when they were in the field or they were in the house, or whatever, they didn't, they weren't able to [inaudible 00:39:18] their churches this is what they had.

This is what they did, the same thing that you're doing now. So finding ways like that I think to relate, to get them more excited or interested I think, um, to get me more excited and interested. So instead of me always thinking about them like when I'm sad okay let me listen to my, yeah, 'cuz that's [inaudible 00:39:40].

Interviewee 1: Uh, to go back on what number 5 said about making the parents making the children come, that's what the parents are doing now, making y'all come. But if it's made a little bit more interesting like number 6 said parents wouldn't have to make you come you would want to come.

When you're made to come you really don't benefit from it. You don't get very much out of it because you're sitting there yeah, yeah I'm here, okay. And you're singing a song yeah, yeah, yeah, okay what's next. What time is this gonna be over (laughter).

So, y-, it has to, it have to be made interesting where you want to come instead of being made to come because the average child in church today are made to come. When I leave out I'm like don't be late, but they come in late every Sunday, you know. [inaudible 00:40:38].

Speaker 1: Okay, um, our questions are done for the evening.

Interviewee 1: Okay.

Speaker 1: Uh, thank you all for your time and, um, like I said the answers will be transcribed and, you know, put into various categories in regards to, you know, the answers, and, you know, what thoughts are, and, you know, what can be added to the actual project.

Um, and then we'll, once we get the results of, of the surveys and the focus group then we'll, you know, probably be able to gauge where we are as a context in regards to the, um, the messages of the spirituals.

Um, and then, you know, it can possibly go further from where it is from preaching series to, you know, maybe concerts to workshops, to, you know, things possibly being put in a bulletin in regards to, you know, periodically in regards to the spirituals just to kinda keep the interest going, keep the awareness up.

Um, you know, but that may, that would be based off of what has already been found in the, in the dissertation so far. Um, and that'll be like for further study for later. Um, but like I said thank you all for what you all have done and I really do appreciate it. So ...

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